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Mrs. Brown On the Skating Rink.

BY

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MRS. BROWN ON THE SKATING RINK.

—o—

PREFACE.

MRS. PAVINS, as is arf-sister to Mrs. Padwick, but a reg'lar broken sperrit, poor thing, as wanted a change ; not as I pities 'er altogether; cos wotever could she expect from a potboy ; for he wasn't no better, a-pretendin' as he'd been and fell in love with 'er at fust sight, thro' a-sharin' of 'er 'im-book at Moody and Sankey's ; and in course he'd only gone in there for a lark, and on the cadge, as the sayin' is ; and then would see 'er 'ome, a-thinkin' as she were a rich widder, as 'ad serous views, and so asked leave at partin' for to call agin, and then went out frequent of evenin's a-walkin' together, as she won't never see forty-eight no more, and 'im not of hage 'ardly, and got five pounds out of 'er borrered money, and was in 'opes myself as it were broke off, thro' 'er never 'avin' 'eard of 'im for months, and then to meet 'im full butt at the Skatin'

Rink at Brighton, as give me a turn ; and as to 'im, why, he coloured up to the roots of 'is 'airs, and didn't seem to be at 'is ease like in speakin', and werry soon cut 'is stick. I certingly were agin givin' of 'im in charge, cos we shouldn't 'ave seen 'im but for our goin' down to Brighton that time, as I felt would turn out bad, for I seemed to 'ave a feelin' agin it, but as I 'ad mentioned it, and Mrs. Pavins she were all for it, thro' a-wantin' change ; and so we went, and I'm sure she've got reason to rue the day as she see that feller agin, as was married to 'er on the sly, and come in and reg'lar sacked 'er lodgin's, and cleaned out 'er drawers, with 'er back turned only for a minnit or two, and even took the false teeth out of the top corner, for the sake of the gold, in course, as they was set in.

As to sayin' as I 'ates Brighton, like the same as every one else says, and yet goes to it constant all the same, why, I considers as it's foolishness, so wouldn't let myself down for to do it ; as is a cheerful place, and that contagious to London, as you may be here to-day and there to-morrow, as the sayin' is ; though in course it's werry much altered since my dear mother's time, as were livin' servant with a lady as went there annular, tho' born 'erself in the year of the riots, as they was called, thro' Lord George Gordin a-burnin' down Newgate, and Bedlam broke loose, in the 'opes of puttin' down

the Pope, as King George wouldn't allow, and sent out 'is troops for to fire on the mob, and stood at the opin winder a-readin' the Riot Hact out loud, and a-'ollerin' out to the sojers, " Pepper 'em well ! " with Queen Charlotte and all the royal family a-backin' of 'im up in the balcony, as must 'ave been a noble sight for a father ; tho' they do say as 'is eldest son defied 'im to 'is face, a-'ollerin' out " Wilks and liberty" all the time, when 'ardly out of 'is cradle, as they do say Queen Charlotte spilt 'im orfully, but that ain't no reason why he should insult 'is father, as were 'is own flesh and blood all the same, as the sayin' is, and a kind-'arted man, tho' never no brains, and gay in 'is youth, like the rest on 'em, and would 'ave 'ung them rioters like dogs, as was brought afore 'im in their shirts, with ropes round their necks ; only Queen Charlotte went down on 'er bended knees for to ask their lives, so he give way to 'er, as always did 'ave the upper 'and on 'im, and shet 'im up when off 'is chump, as the sayin' is, with a doctor as he couldn't a-bear in Windsor Castle, with all the rooms padded, for fear as he should 'urt 'issel agin the walls, as some said drove him more mad ; and they do say as the Prince of Wales and 'im never did get on not from the fust, as often 'appens with father and son, tho' in course worry wrong in a young man not to give in to 'is father, and not by different mothers neither,

as often causes quarrels in families, tho' they do say as that there family were a rumbusticle lot, as is why Queen Wictoria 'ave been so strict in bringin' up 'ern, as it wouldn't never 'ave done to 'ave them all a-runnin' wild over the place, the same as George the Fourth, as built Brighton, leastways, were the makin' on it, as is the same thing in the end. I've 'eard my dear mother say as I were a-sayin', and she remembered a-goin' there with that lady as she lived along with when fust she went to service, as wasn't no more than a reg'lar sand-eap, with jest a few 'ouses facin' of the sea, long afore this ere Pavilion as is now a-standin' were built, and wasn't there nice games carried on there, as couldn't never be overlooked with undergrounded passages to next door, and all manner like that; leastways, so parties says, tho' there ain't no believin' nothink as you 'ears about royal families, as I do believe there's lots of people would rather 'ave them bad than good; and wot they don't know bad about 'em they inwents, jest for to make up a good story, or to 'ave a larf over that as ain't no larfin' matter. But certingly 'ave 'eard say as the Prince Regency's 'ouse, as they did use to call him at Brighton, weren't at fust nothink like a pallis, thro' bein' that plain, and no more than a gentleman's 'ouse to look at, but were built up arterwards, jest like the Rooshin Crumblin as they blowed up for to burn out old

Boney, and serve 'im right ; and that's 'ow my dear mother 'eard all about Mrs. Fitz'erbert, as were King George's lawful wife, no doubt, and lived and died at Brighton, thro' bein' married to 'im in 'er own drorin'-room, as wasn't legal in the eye of the law, thro' not a-belongin' to the 'Stablished Church ; not but wot she was 'ighly respected, and they do say as he wore 'er 'air next 'is 'art in a locket to 'is dyin' 'our ; tho' he didn't take no notice on 'er, as was a-livin' next door to 'im all the time, thro' other favourites ; but some does show their feelin's like that ; as it's easy to say as you loves any one, but give me the love as shows itself in acts.

But, law bless me, Brighton were only a bit of a village like in them days ; and I remember myself, years arter that, when Lady Wittles did used to go as was only two coaches a day, as was drove by Sir Wincent Cottin under four 'ours to the " Helefant and Castle," and jest arter that come in the railway, as soon give the coach the go-by, and drove it off the road, tho' some parties never would go by rail ; and old Miss Mittens, as lived close agin the Steen, she waited to go up to London to get 'er money out of the Stocks by coach for years, and then when it did start agin thro' bein' upset 'ad 'er arm broke in turnin' a sharp corner, as was only nat'r'al to to be expected, cos in course the coachman 'ad got out of the 'abit of drivin', so didn't 'andle the

ribbins that clever as they was used to in old times ; not as I cares about them good old times myself, cos I'm sure coach-travellin' were orful. Night and day on the road, with sometimes six inside, and as to outside, it was enuf to cut the life out of you, a-meetin' the wind constant night and day, and as to poor people, they 'ad to travel by the waggin, as was weeks on the road ; and tho' the swells 'ad their carriages, and posted with four 'orses, why, it took old King William many 'ours to get to Brighton from Winsor, as were merry fond on it for all that, and did used to walk along the sea there, and ask parties to come to dinner quite friendly, as put the Queen to 'er wits' end, and 'ad to send out for chops, and kep it up pretty late, too, as was different to King George, as were a early bird as couldn't keep 'is eyes open arter ten, thro' a-takin' such lots of that black drop for to keep off the gout from 'is stomach, as were always his weak pint, as made him drowsy, no doubt, jest the same as them corjials did used to lull off the infants, as is wot I never did 'old with givin' em myself, and many a child 'as been let sleep into death, in my opinion, thro' them, and took with fits arterwards, as was called water on the brain.

I must say as Brighton is that cheerful in winter, thro' bein' no fallin' leaves, and no wonder King George did used to like it, not as he could see the

sea from one of the winders, and always lived on the ground floor, but in course had lots of company for to keep up 'is sperrits ; not as ever I should care to be a king myself, with all their company, as must be dismal work, with sentries a-mountin' guard over you on every side, and a-presentin' their arms if you put your nose outside the door, or even was to look out of the winder. "No," I says, "liberty for me," as likes to put on my bonnet, and start with my umbreller, and 'ail a bus if it should turn to rain or feel tired, as it's wonderful 'ow far you can go for tuppence, as did used to be thought a good shillin's-worth when I was a gal from the "Black Horse," Coventry Street, to Sloane Street, tho' parties didn't go so far, cos there was a turnpike at 'Igh Park Corner, close agin St. George's Hospital, as were a old-fashioned lookin' 'ouse a-facin' the park, as 'ave seen the patients myself a-lookin' out of the winders in their night-caps when a-eatin' a 'aporth of curds and whey, as they sold at the park gate, thro' a aunt of mine as lived in Knightsbridge a-takin' us for a walk in the park of a summer evnin', long afore the Dook of Wellington's 'ouse were turned into stone, or he let them put 'im up there on 'orsback, and see Queen Carerline's funeral, I've 'eard her say, from the top of a 'ouse, when they fired on the mob, as was on 'er side all thro', tho' she didn't never ought to have

tried for to force 'er way into Westminster Abbey, as ain't proper behaviour in a church ; but law ! them kings and queens is to be pitied, for in course they never knows right from wrong, thro' nobody never a-darin' to say them nay, and that's 'ow it is as them Rooshins and Prooshins gets to be them tyrants, cos in course, if that there old Hemp'r'or were to say as four and four only made seven, old Beastmark would swear as it did, and make every one else say the same, or else send 'em to prisin and seize all their goods, as is nice goin's on in a Christshun country, with a pious old king at the 'ead of it, as ain't never 'appy without 'is 'im-book in 'is 'and, and 'ave been a model 'usban and father, no doubt.

If King George could look up and see wot 'is Pavilion 'ave come to, he would stare, and then to think as any one can get from London Bridge to Brighton a little over the 'our, let alone the eight 'ours at the sea-side as did used to be for three shillin' every Sunday and Monday, why, he wouldn't believe it if he saw it. That's why I never will say as nothink's impossible, and I shouldn't wonder as balloons will be all the go some day, not as I've got patience with that there French fool as took and risked 'is life along with 'is young wife, jest cos them other idjots charfed 'im ; and as to that there fishin'-boat as picked 'em up, they did ought to be re-

warded handsome, and I'd make them jabberin' idjots in Callis pay the piper for their jeers.

But law, there always was fools, and always will be ; and as to Mrs. Mabley a-goin' on about that there tunnil under the sea, a-makin' us all into French, why, it's downright nonsense ; and as to sayin' as the French will come and conker us un-awares some fine day, by the night train, it's foolishness, cos it ain't likely as there wouldn't be some one for to blow the gaff, as they was comin', thro' the telegraf, and I should like to see the train of sojers as would run into us with one of them Woolwich infants fired slap into the tunnil to meet it arf way, and then wot's easier than to let the sea in at both hends, as would precious soon cook their goose, as the sayin' is, if they was the finest French sojers as ever was afloat, tho' in course it would be a blessin' to get over to France without no sea sickness, as is a 'orful sensation, as is wot 'ave certingly kep the French at bay, as the sayin' is ; but that wouldn't be no pertection for us if we hadn't somethink better to keep 'em off with, as is 'arts of oak, as the sayin' is, as is wot will fight, and we'll conker agin and agin.

But, law bless me, to think of the time when there wasn't no gas, nor yet steam, and 'owever did parties get on, I should like to know, not but wot I've 'eard my dear mother speak of a aunt of 'ers,

as lived out Croydon way, and never come to London but once, and 'ad 'er pocket picked in Fleet Street, a-stoppin' to see them figgers outside old St. Dunstin's Church, as struck the 'ours, and was took to the Regency Park, when that church was pulled down, as the crowds so frightened the old lady, as she took faint, and went back to Croydon more dead than alive in a shay cart, but slep one night at Battersea on the road, and 'er grand-daughter lived servant along with the Mars, as was all murdered one Saturday night in the Ratcliff 'Igh-way, when they was a-buildin' the London Docks, and would 'ave been murdered too if she 'adn't been out too long on an errand for to fetch some oysters for supper, and no doubt she stopped a-gossipin' over, as tho' wrong in a servant, saved 'er life, as is all werry well as it turned out; but a bad 'abit for all that, as in genral you sends 'em for something as you wants in a 'urry; and as to murders, why, they was as common as 'edge stakes, as the sayin' is; and Miss Pilkinton she's agin 'angin', and says as it don't stop murders. So I says, "Pre'aps not, but it must stop one murderer any'ow, and then there's one devil the less, as the sayin' is, and that's somethink, jest the same as you'd kill a wild beast, cos in course, there's plenty more where he come from, but you've got rid of one; and stopped 'is little game.

MRS. BROWN ON THE SKATING RINK.

As I says to Mrs. Padwick, "In course I takes a interest in them Royal Families, as the werry sight of that dear Princess of Wales, and them little dear children, is a pleasure for anyone to see sich a sweet, pretty young mother, as no doubt Queen Wictorier took a pride in 'avin' of 'em all to that there party when that boy took and throwed a stone thro' the winder of the railway, as might 'ave knocked out a royal eye or a front tooth, as wouldn't 'ave mattered to them youngest, as ain't shed 'em yet, nor if it 'ad been a maid of 'oner, as in gen'ral is old maids ; and in course the country would 'ave stood a new tooth, or even a glass eye under the circumstances ; not but wot them dratted boys did ought to be well chastised, with their cats, and their cattipults, all over the place, as a good warmin' won't do 'em no 'arm, as in course they don't care whose eye they

knocks out, but must have their lark, as might be some one as worked for their bread, like poor Mrs. Pendle, as 'ave 'ad to support a sick 'usban' and five, with the sewin' machine, as must all 'ave gone to 'the workus, with 'er eye out; and I'm sure the rates is frightful 'igh as it is, and don't want a family of seven thrown on the parish. So, as I were a-sayin', I'd give the world, as the sayin' is, jest to 'ave a look at that Prince's grounds, as I knows the spot well, as is close agin Sloane Street, as did used to be a genteel naybourhood, but 'ave gone down a deal of late; the parties as I once knowed lived there as 'eld their 'eads werry 'igh, and was some on 'em carriage folks; and as to Cadogin Place, it's where nobility did used to visit; with powder footmen, long afore Belgrave Square were built, as was waste ground, and only the five fields, with the King's Road a-runnin' thro' it, and a 'edge each side, as no 'ackney coaches wasn't allowed to go along without a-takin' of the plates off, as showed the number, as was all rubbish; and why ever they allows parties to put up them bars across the streets now-a-days for to stop the thoro'-fares, I can't think, cos tho' in course the ground belongs to noblemen, yet if they've been and turned their grounds into streets and squares, like Russell Square, they ain't no right to block up the way with them bars and gates across Gore Street. as they

calls it; as can remember werry well at one time as a cart weren't allowed to cross thro' them streets as leads into Belgrave Square.

And there's them Pallis Gardens at Kensinton, as they won't let a cab go thro' unless you're a-goin' to one of the 'ouses, as is all rubbish, as any one could say they was, if stoopin' to a false'ood; and wot I calls really stoppin' of progress.

I'm sure it's a downright pleasure to walk in the Park of a mornin' now, and see all them swells a-airin' of theirselves, a-tryin' to get a appytite for lunch, as in course bein' up arf the night don't give you. But, law! where they all comes from, and where they gets the money from to spend, I can't think!

Tho' there's a many a-doin' the swell there as is downright swindlers, and lives by robbery, the same as a 'ole fam'ly as come to lodge along with Mrs. Padwick, and took 'er parlours and three bed-rooms, as is five guineas a-week in the season, and always full and obligated to get bed room all down the street, to accommodate her lodgers, and then walked out of the place with all their clothes on their backs at the end of a fortnight; cos Mrs. Padwick, she ain't one to let lodgins run beyond the week; and 'ow they got every think away on their backs goodness knows; but they did it, and nothink but empty boxes left in their rooms, as was a

reg'lar gang of swindlers, as was always a-changin' their names as often as their lodgins.

But law, bless me! there ain't nothink but robbery a-goin' on all round, and willany; for I'm sure some of them dressed-up dollies, as you sees in carriages, ain't no better than common thieves, as gets their livin' by robbin' tradespeople, as is too free with their trustin' in my opinion, for I shan't never forget the way as a fieldmale let poor old Mrs. Moody in, as 'ad a furnished 'ouse settled on 'er in St. John's Wood, and let it out; as were a reg'lar little doll's 'ouse; not as ever I cared for it, for there wasn't room to swing a cat, as the sayin' is, in one of the rooms.

Mrs. Moody, when she 'ad let the place to that party, weren't quite easy in 'er mind over the rent, so she says to me, she says—

"Martha, as 'ave knowed me from a gal, I wish as you would give a eye to the place for me," thro' bein' confined to 'er chair with gout.

So accordin' one mornin' as I were a-goin' to the Bank for to receive my money out of the Stocks, I says to 'er as I'd take the bus straight from the Bank to St. John's Wood, as would set me down at the door. I must say as I 'ates a bus as won't stop still while you're a-gettin' in, and will shoot you, 'ead fust, with a jerk, into anybody's lap, and then come with your 'ead agin the end, as is

let down for to make room for the coachman to set, and sometimes a lamp there as 'ave crushed my bonnet agin and agin ; and the 'ats as I've see come smash agin the tops of buses is untold, and them parties quite short, if you warns 'em agin it, a-gettin' in, as one party as I put up my umbreller for to pint it out to 'im, says—

“ Keep your beastly old gingham to yourself; do you think I'm blind, you old fool ? ”

So I says, “ I don't think nothink about you, except as you ain't no gentleman.”

Well, whether I were robbed in that bus, goodness knows ; for I never put my 'and in my pocket, as I wears in front under my dress ; but any'ow, I lost my money, as were my only two and fippence, and lucky it weren't my arf-year of Aunt Ablet's Stocks, as she left me, as is seven pounds ten, thro' bein' five 'undred pounds in the Three per cent. Counsels, as I'd pinned in my bussim ; as Brown says makes up the National Debt, as they're a-talkin' of payin' off ; and I'm sure I 'ope they won't, for I don't know where to put my money, as is too much for a corner drawer, or even between the mattrasses, as I don't consider a safe place myself.

Well, when I got to St. John's Wood, I were put down at Mrs. Moody's 'ouse, and rung the servints' bell, thro' not a-likin' to seem to 'ave no bounce about me ; and of all the slovins as ever I see, it

were the party as opened that gate, as must 'ave been 'ired by the day, I should say, and says as Mrs. Monclure didn't never see strangers, leastways, fieldmales.

I says, "I don't want to see Mrs. Monclure, and as to bein' a fieldmale, I'm not likely to change at my time of life; but jest say as I only come from Mrs. Moody for to give a eye over things."

Jest then I 'eard a woice a-callin', and that dirty slut went in, and she come out and says, "Oh!" she says, "there was one of your lot 'ere yesterday, and Mrs. Monclure would like to see you, I knows, cos she said as wot you left was beautiful readin' and werry good for the poor."

I says, "I never were 'ere yesterday, nor yet left nothink;" but, she says, "Walk in, do."

So in I goes, as is a pretty bit of gardin; with a little dog as come a-snappin' at me, with a poll parritt on a perch, with a chain on to 'is leg, as shrieked frightful. It certingly is a pretty 'ouse with them French winders a-openin' on to the bit of gardin, as ain't no size to speak on, but full of plants. Out at the winder come a party all paint and yaller 'air, in a pink sort of a dressin' gownd and fancy slippers, and a 'at on, a-nussin' of a little dog.

She says, "Ah! you good soul, I wanted to talk

to you, as was that pleased at the meetin' the other day."

I says, "Oh! indeed," not 'avin' no consumption wot she meant.

"Ah!" she says, "and the dear Princess there, and that dear Duchess of Smotherland, as is wot I calls true religion."

Well, I thinks, if yours is true religion, there's a deal of drink in it, for if ever I smelt sperrits, or see a party as were a little on, it were Mrs. Monclure.

"So," she says, "let's sit down, and do you mind me a-doin' of a soda and brandy, for I ain't well, and ain't 'ad no breakfast, and you must take somethink, as a glass of champain will do us both good."

I says, "None for me, thank you, as am on my way 'ome, and called thro' Mrs. Moody, a-sayin' as she'd like, if quite convenient, for to 'ave 'er rent, as is nearly two months, and 'ave got a receipt for the money."

She says, "Oh!" a-alterin' of 'er tone, "you've come for the rent; but," she says, "I've paid it."

I says, "You paid the first month in advance, I am awares, and was to pay that way always, tho' it's run over the time."

"Oh!" she says, "I'll send it in a day or two;

and thought you was the same lady as called the other day from Moody and Sankey; as it were lovely to 'ear 'er talk."

So I says, "I'm sorry as you've been disappointed."

She says, "Don't go, and do take a-some-think, if only a cup of tea."

I says, "Thank you, I'd rayther not," cos I thought I'd stop for the rent, tho' I didn't like that woman's ways; for she'd a nasty look with 'er, as was painted, lips and all; she says, arter a bit, "Well," she says, "if you've got the receipt I may as well pay you," and she calls to a party in the name of Griffin, for to bring 'er the cash-box. Griffin were a reglar old 'orrer for to look at; but she come out with a little box as she put on a little table, and that fieldmale took and opened, and there was a lot of money.

She says, "'Ow much is it ?"

I says, "My receipt is for fifteen guineas, as is a month's rent."

She says, "Well, there's the money," and counts out gold and silver, as she give me, and I gives 'er the receipt. She says, "Now you 'ave a glass of bottled stout, for your reglar done up, I can see."

Well, I certainly did feel as I wanted a some-think, so I said as I would, and put the money in a

pocket as I always 'ave made in my waist, thro' not a-wishin' to mix Mrs. Moody's money with my own.

So that party says, "Oh ! what a clever pocket ? "

I says, "Yes, this will defy all the thieves as ever was born."

She says, "Will it, oh ! I must remember." Then she says, "Griffin, come and look at this clever place for a pocket, as this good lady 'ave got."

Griffin give a look at it, and jest then a bit of a boy brought out a large glass of stout, as that party says, "That ain't the right beer. Do, Griffin, go and get the other."

I says, "That looks werry nice," for I were that parched, I could 'ave tossed it off at a draught. Griffin, she took 'old on it, and goes into the 'ouse, and presently came out with the same glass of beer, as now I'm sure it was. I took a good pull at it, but there was a taste in it as I didn't like ; but from that moment I didn't remember nothink. I set in that gardin a-gazin' at vacuum for ever so long, and could 'ear 'em a-talkin', and fancied I felt someone at my pocket, but I 'adn't no strength, thro' bein' that drowsy, and don't remember nothink till I felt someone a-shakin' me and sayin' "You mustn't set 'ere." I don't know what I said ; but see as there was a bobby a-lookin' at me with 'is bull's eye, turned on to my face ; and 'eard

'im say, "Blessed if I know whether she drunk or dyin'."

I made a effort for to speak, and then felt as if I were a-settin' on the ground, with my back agin a wall.

I says, "Get me 'ome," tho' I couldn't 'ardly get the words out; and then I felt as I were a-bein' put in a cab, and then I don't remember no more till I was woke up in a strange place as I were in bed in, and I takes and sets up, and if it wasn't a 'ospital ward.

A party as come up to me says, "Ah, I'm glad to see you in your right senses agin, and must send for the doctor, as says he must inform the perlice."

I says, "Wot about? wot am I here for? Oh, my money! Where are my things?"

She says, "Here they are, as ain't been touched, but jest in the state as you was picked up last night."

I says, "Picked up where?"

Just then the doctor come, and said it were a pretty piece of business, and but for 'im I should 'ave been locked up all night in the perlice cells, as would 'ave been my death.

I says, "Let me see my gownd," as was all bedaubed with mud, and not a fardin' in my pockets, as did ought to 'ave been over twenty-five pounds. So I says, "Any'ow I'll get up," as I did

accordin', and had a cup of tea quite comfortable along with the matron, as were that kind ; and then I waited till the perlice come and told 'em my story, and sent for Mrs. Padwick, as come in a cab to take me away.

So we went up to that 'ouse in St. John's Wood, with the perlice on the box, and when we got there we rung and knocked and 'ammered till the servant come out from oppersite and says, "It ain't no manner of use you a-knockin' or a-ringin' there, for they went off in two cabs last night, as I told my missus as I were sure they was a-boltin', but she only said it weren't no business of 'ern."

So as the perlice said we hadn't no right to break opin the door, I 'ad to go and tell poor Mrs. Moody, as I broke it to 'er that gentle as she only 'ad a fit instead of dyin' outright, as were wot I fully expected as she would do, and 'ad to send to 'er lawyer, as come, but couldn't take persession not till the month were up, cos they'd got that receipt as they'd robbed me of; but that lawyer's clerk he were a sharp chap, and he says, " You can get in on a magistrate's warrant if you can swear as you was robbed and was 'occussed ;" as in course I could.

So we got into the 'ouse, as were reg'lar ransacked, and glass and china broke all over the place, and its lucky as Mrs. Moody were too bad to

see it, or it would 'ave finished 'er off sooner than the gout, as were 'er end within the month, and died without no will, and her nevvies and niecées, as were a bad lot, got a-fightin' over the property, as the lawyers got all the pull out on ; as shows as ill-gotten gains never prospers, cos there were a something fishy in the way as that old Mrs. Moody got the property, as wasn't never explained.

But I never 'ad to pay the money back, cos as the lawyer said I 'adn't never received it, as were the truth, and that's why I don't like to see them parties a-goin' a-swellin' about under false pertences, as is for the most part thieves. I never told Brown not for months arter, for he were away from 'ome at the time, as would 'ave called me a fool for my pains, cos that Mrs. Moody were a woman he never could abear, and I only went to see out of pity, as wotever she had been were upwards of seventy and a 'opeless cripple thro' gout.

But the idea of takin' me for Moody's good lady at that 'ouse, as I can't think wot sich parties could want with them tracks, but I suppose as they thinks it'll do 'em good, as is more than I do, for when two parties called on me over Moody and Sankey, they got a worry short answer, thro' me a-goin' to the door myself, and tellin' 'em as I didn't want none of their cant and rubbish. One on 'em

says, "Surely you'll listen when the Archbishop of Cantyberry 'olds with us?"

I says, "Yes, and a good many old women besides, but I don't 'old with 'em."

"Oh," she says, "then all the most eminent Dissenters is with us."

I says, "Are they? Let them be if they likes; that ain't no busyness of mine."

They says, "Are you in the right way?"

I says, "I 'opes so."

"Oh!" says one, "this won't do, this 'opin'"

"Now," I says, "I can't stand at the door a-maggin' to you all day, as 'ave got other fish to fry."

"Oh!" she says, "never mind your fish; think of your soul."

"Oh!" I says, "bother! This east wind is a-cuttin' me in arf."

She says, "If you don't care about your own salvation, pre'aps you've a servant as you won't stand in 'er light; let us see 'er."

I says, "You'd better let 'er alone, for she's the Irish perswasion; and if you takes the liberty to talk to 'er about 'er soul, she'll give you somethink 'ot at your 'eads, as nearly drownded the city missionary with a pail of soapsuds last week, as would preach to 'er over the palins while she were a'-angin' out."

So they says, "Ah, I'm afraid you're given over."

I says, "The sooner you gives over a-comin' interferin' with other people the better, as shows you're no ladies, a-comin' a-knockin' at people's doors with your rubbish, as 'ad better be at 'ome mindin' of your famlies, and a-mendin' of your stockens."

And so I shet the door on the pair of 'em, jest the same as I did on them as come round about convertin' of the Jews, as they said cost sich a deal of money, as they couldn't keep it up. So I says, "Well, then, if they won't be converted without bein' paid 'ansome for it, let 'em alone." Not as I 'olds with usin' no force to 'em, nor yet a-trickin' of 'em into Cristshuns, the same as I see done in a play called "The Merchant of Venus," as certingly were a lovely little place where they showed it; but not goin's on as I 'olds with, and shouldn't 'ave went but for a lady as were up from the country, and lodgin' with Mrs. Padwick, and couldn't go alone. It were a foolish sort of a story, as far as I could make out, all about a party as wanted to marry a rich lady, and 'adn't got the money for to get 'is clothes out, so as to cut a good figger, so asked a friend for to lend him some duckits, as run to thousands; but then that forrin money always is rubbish, cos look at franks over in France, as a 'undred on ain't only four pounds. Well, this ere

friend were rather short, so 'ad to go to the Jews, leastways, to a Jew as were a erritable old party, and couldn't a-bear no Cristshuns ; and no wonder, for they kicked him about, and spit on 'im, and insulted 'im gross, as ain't the way to make nobody see their horrors, in my opinion. Well, this 'ere Jew he lent the money with a deal of grumbling, but said if it weren't paid back to the minnit, he were to 'ave a pound of flesh cut off of the party's breast as he'd been and lent it to. I says, "Wot rubbish ! Why, he wouldn't never get a pound off that party's breast, not if he scraped 'im down to 'is breast-bone." Well, they got the money, and then he got 'is clothes out, as certingly was werry lovely, and must 'ave been put away for a good bit, and then he went a-courtin' of this 'ere young lady, as were a lovely creetur, tho' she'd 'ad a old fool for a father, as 'ad left it so in 'is will as she was to marry the party as opened the right one out of three boxes, and thro' sich rubbish she had a narrer squeak of not gettin' of a blackymoor for a 'usban', as was as near right as a toucher openin' the right box. Well, then that old Jew he 'ad 'is own troubles ; for he'd a good-for-nothink 'ussey of a daughter, as took and bolted along with a feller, and robbed 'er old father into the bargin, as was bad, tho' he were a Jew. He took on dreadful, the old man did, about 'is dorter, and were a-goin' nearly mad, and

the only comfort as he 'ad was 'earin' as that party as he'd lent the money to couldn't pay, so he could 'ave 'is pound of flesh. I says, "A nasty old beast! What's the use on it when he's got it, as won't be nothink but skin, and the cat'll turn up 'er nose at it." Any'ow, he would 'ave it; and if he didn't come afore the magistrat and all the court with 'is knife ready, and said as he'd got the scales for to way it. Of all the old duffers as ever I see, it were that court, and an old feller as they said were the Dook as set there with a lot more, a-doin' nothink, while that there Jew kep' on a-sayin' as he'd 'ave 'ad a good slice off that there Cristshun; and so he would if that there young lady 'adn't come in, dressed up like a judge, as floored 'im. I knowed 'er the minnit as she come in, but nobody else didn't seem to, not even that party as were her lover. I must say as she pretty soon took and turned that there court inside out, and showed wot a set of old muffs they was; not but wot in my opinion that there Jew were swindled shameful; cos if that there fieldmale didn't say as he might take 'is pound of flesh, but mustn't spill a drop of blood, as was foolishness, cos 'owever could any one even cut their finger without a drop of blood bein' shed. Well, in course the Jew were reglar nonplushed, and then he says, "Give me my money," as they'd been and offered 'im over and

over agin, but was that mean, as not to stick to their words, and then if they didn't say as they'd take 'is life if he wouldn't turn Cristshun like 'is dorter. So I says, "I don't 'old with Jews, tho' I 'ave 'ad good friends among 'em, as is kind-'arted people; but," I says, "as to burnin' em, and cheatin' 'em, and a-sidin' agin em with unnatral dorters like that, I do not 'old with it; and tho' I took to that young lady as dressed up like a lawyer werry much, and so I did 'er maid, yet I think as they'd both got 'old of a couple of duffers for 'usbans', for never did I see parties more easy took in over a couple of rings, as they'd give em fust, and then done 'em out of when they was dressed up like judges, as made me reglar put out to see anyone so foolish; and I considers as that play is a lark altogether, as would make you larf if they wasn't all so serous over it; and I must say as fair play is a jewel, as the sayin' is, and that Jew he'll never make a good Cristshun in this world, with sich a bad example as they set 'im; not as I pities him, for he was a nasty old beast to make sich a bargin, but yet did ought to 'ave 'ad 'is money back agin, any'ow, partikler as it had been offered 'im by that party, as I don't call actin' like a lady.

I did used to go about a good deal with that lady, as lodged with Mrs. Padwick in the name of Marbel, with money no objec, and wouldn't never

move an inch without a cab, as runs into money, as is why in gen'ral I goes in busses myself, tho' not when I wears my best things, as is sure to be spilte with parties gettin' in and out.

Well, her son 'ave got somethink to do with these 'ere skatin' rinks, as they've took out patterns for, so nobody else can't use it, as is only skates on wheels arter all, as I'm a-goin' to 'ave a good look at ; for tho' I did see it at Brighton, I can't say as I give 'em a fair trial, and ain't one as likes to be down on anythink without a trial, partikler a skatin' rink, as costs a deal of money to get up, and I 'ave 'eard say as the Princess of Wales she can skate like a swan a-swimmin', as must look lovely ; and in course these ere skatin' rinks will be a great thing for Injeer, where there ain't no hice natrally, as no doubt the Prince of Wales will take one out along with 'im, as will be that cool place for to set in ; not as the one at Brighton were cool the day as I were there, but in course wot would be 'ot for Brighton would be down-right cold for Injeer. Not as skatin' is a thing as I 'olds with, 'cos of them falls, as tho', if no bones broken, is a great shock to the constitution, a-comin' down with all your force, as knocked all my eeth out of my ead ; and if they'd been my own nat'r'al ones, I do believe would 'ave loosened 'em at the roots. Not but wot it's fine exercise, and

might keep parties in 'ealth as ain't up to walkin', and would be a fine thing for them parties to take out to the North Pole with 'em for to take exercise on while they're shet up in the winter, as could be laid down on the deck of a vessel quite easy, as will be all covered in, cos they dursn't put their noses over the door. Not as I should care for to go out a-lookin' for that there Pole myself, cos I'm sure there's lots of Poles nearer 'ome as wants lookin' arter, poor things; but then the Hemperor of Roosher he wouldn't stand our interferin' with 'is Poles, as he bullies frightful and kicks about jest as if they was negro blacks, as don't 'ave much of a time on it over in Injeer, as no doubt the Prince of Wales is a-goin' over for to set right, cos in course Queen Wictorier wants to know 'ow things is a-goin' on, and he'll come back and tell 'er; for it's 'is dooty as he should up and speak to 'er different to wot any one else can, as must be a great comfort to 'er to 'ave a son like that; the same as poor Mrs. Wildin' as couldn't never 'ave carried on the pawn-brokerin' busyness arter Wildin' were took that suddin but for 'er son a-comin' of age the year as 'is father died, as were a quinsey as he'd neglected, and might 'ave been saved if he could but 'ave larfed; but tho' they took and read Joo Miller to 'im, and all about a party in the name of Tupper as sung for 'is supper, he never so much as smiled, poor dear.

That young Wildin' he were a great comfort to 'is mother, tho' a little gay at fust thro' gettin' 'is liberty, as 'is father 'ad been that strict thro' attendin' of 'is Ebbyneezer reg'lar, as he quite supported, and did used to preach 'issel of a week-day, and left a pretty fortin behind, as is a good busyness if you sticks to the pledges, as ain't in for a fourth of their real value, and is seldom or ever redeemed as the sayin' is; and, in a gen'ral way, them as takes to pawnin' don't never get on, tho' in course it's a thing as a many 'ave been drove to, and better than troublin' of your friends or bein' under a obbligation; not but wot there's a many as would never 'ave robbed if they 'adn't knowed where they could get the money on the swag.

But as I were a-sayin', there's a deal of money bein' made out of them skatin' rinks, as is better than crocky, in my opinion, not but wot that's a nice game for young ladies, and parsins as in gen'ral is dabs at it, partikler when single; for I never shall forget the lots of ministers as got wives thro' crocky near where our Liza is a-livin', as is a cathedral town, and they played a good deal on the close, cos them parties as belonged to the cathedral they won't let theirselves down to wisit parties in the town; and the Bishop he 'ad nine dorters, as was plain, and the Dean he 'ad five as was as ugly as sin, as the sayin' is, tho' in course

amiable, like their pa's ; and the Dean he got all 'is five off with money on the mother's side, as well as 'is savin's ; but the Bishop's gals, they stuck on, and nearly all, escept four or five as were picked up by curates, as was in dooty bound in course to lend the Bishop a 'elpin' 'and, as were a merry nice lookin' old gentleman, with a 'and like a lily, and I do think the stoutest party for a wife as ever filled up one side of a open carridge.

I don't think as ever I did see sich a place for parsons as Brighton, as for the most part enjoys bad 'ealth, poor fellers, and a many goes out to forrin parts as can't abear the climate of the colinies, as is partikler 'ard on the Bishops, and drives 'em home by the score ; as in course can't live all their lives among them 'eathen savidges, as they can't convert, and as I've heard say would as soon eat a bishop as a mishunary, and don't respect the 'Stablished Church no more than the Baptists ; so it's a comfort to think as .. Bishop as goes over to New Zealand needn't die in despair over there, but may come over to a pallis 'ere, and be preaps wot they calls translated, or sent to Coventry, and if not he can retire to Brighton, to end 'is days in peace and plenty. I'm sure they did ought to be good Cristshuns in Brighton, for there's one parson to look arter every seven, if not five, and all the religions as ever were 'eard on, from Jews to

Ritcherlists, as can't be put down, for they man-nidges to dodge the law some'ow, by fair means or foul, as the sayin' is; and as to the Bishops, they sets them at defiance.

If ever there was a reglar wortext of disserpation, as the sayin' is, why, it's Brighton of a fine day, with all the world and his wife a-ridin' and a-driving and walkin' along the sea, with the sun a-shinin' that bright as you wouldn't think as there was sorrers nor yet sickness in this world ; tho', no doubt, there's a many a-goin' about with a wooden leg in the fam'ly, tho' they do 'old their 'eads so 'igh, and if they paid for the clothes on their backs, wouldn't be them swells as they are. But law ! it takes a good many for to make up a world as is a reglar puzzle, thro' one arf not a-knowin' 'ow the other arf lives ; and, for my part, I don't believe as many knows 'ow they lives themselves, for it's surprisin' 'ow parties goes on a-cuttin' of it fat in London, but they ain't nothink to Brighton ; for it 'ave often made me stare when a-stoppin' along with Mrs. Padwick, to hear parties as is upper servints, not in good families such as I 'ave knowed myself, but only soap-bilers and master builders, and sich like, as begun with the 'od, and now keeps their butlers and men-cooks ; not but wot you can spot 'em in a minnit for no gentlefolks, tho' they 'ave gold and silver on the table, by their lan-

gwidgē, as is low-lived, and their 'abits as ain't up to the knocker, as the sayin' is, as I don't consider swearin' at a footman afore the ladies, and a-smokin' in the drorin'-room, with constant soders and brandy all over the place, tho' in course some is natur's noblemen, as the sayin' is, the same as the party in the name of Scrobbis, as married Melia Biffin, as worked in the corset line for a shop in Oxford Street, and 'im only a bricklayer's clerk, as is wot they calls them, as was like 'is own father, and carried the 'od, as he's in course proud to talk about at 'is own table now-a-days with lords and ladies a-settin' with him, as 'ave bought 'issel a title, and ridin' as big as bull beef, as the sayin' is, along the King's Road in a yaller carriage, and 'er by 'is side as fat as a 'og, but not orty, tho' she 'ave brought 'ome a penn'orth of coal in the tail of 'er gownd afore now, and glad to get a penny candle on trust at a chandly shop, as they do say he made 'is money over railroad contrax a-supplyin' of the iron, as in course there couldn't be no cheatin' over, cos in course a railway must be all open and above board, as the sayin' is. Well, there he was, a-ridin' along as 'is wife's brother's wife pinted 'im out to me.

So I says to 'er, "Well, you are lucky to 'ave sich rich relations as that!"

"Oh," she says, "bless you, he never done

nothink for us, and 'is own mother died in the workus, and so would 'is father if he hadn't a-fell off of a scaffold with too 'eavy a load of bricks for a old man, and died afore they could get 'im to the 'ospital."

"Well," I says, "'is son couldn't help that."

She says, "He might 'ave give the poor old man a trifle a week, cos he was well off then, and the old man past work."

"But," I says, "the parish would make 'im support 'is mother."

"Ah!" she says, "so they tried, but he proved as she 'adn't no legal claim on 'im, cos she never could tell where she was married ever in Ireland, as wasn't a lorful marridge ; but," she says, "bless you ! the old lady was proud to be in the workus rather than be beholden to 'er son, and never spoke 'is name."

"Ah!" I says, "and right she was. Let 'im ride in 'is carridge ; he's only a beggar on horse-back, and I knows where he's a-ridin' to."

She says, "And both 'is wife's brothers, as the eldest was my poor 'usban', died poor, and he wculdn't give 'em a penny."

I says, "In course he wouldn't. Why didn't they work 'ard as he'd done ?"

"That's wot he said," says she.

"Ah!" I says, "at robbin' and cheatin' and

lyin' over everythink, as 'ave been 'is 'ard work, and then they might 'ave rode in their carrides too, and you'd have been 'my lady,' preaps; but,' I says, "never mind, pride shall 'ave a fall, as the sayin' is, as any one may know is true thro' a-readin' about Jane Shore, as come to die in a ditch oppersite that werry church as now stands close agin the Eastern Counties, as I knowed parties as lived near to many years in the name of Wilkins, as was a 'ard-workin' man, and a lamb in temper till arter supper over pollyticks, as would go on agin them in a high spear as wanted to trample the poor man under foot. Cos as he did used to say them as 'olds their 'eads the 'ighest gits the 'ardest knocks, as pretty nigh proved fatal to my own uncle, as were 'urryin' thro' a harchway in a thick fog, as stood six feet in 'is socks, and would 'ave been killed on the spot all but for the porter's knot, as he wore 'indpart before for a buffer, thro' bein' a fellowship porter, and didn't come to 'is senses till the next day, and as to bein' in licker, 'is wife said as she'd knowed 'im brought 'ome ten times wuss than that with all 'is senses about 'im, when there wasn't no fog nor harchway neither in 'is way for 'im to run agin.

But wot the world's a-comin' to I can't think, as is more surprisin' every day, and there's no tellin' who may keep their carrides afore they

dies, for we're all born, but none on us berried, as the sayin' is. No doubt them as lives the longest will see the most, not as I wishes to say anythink agin the indignant blind school, as teaches 'em wonderful, and knows more than a many as 'ave got their eyesight.

But as I were a-sayin' Wilkins, he were that wild when Disreely come in a-sayin' as he longed for tyrant's 'art's blood.

So I says, "Don't talk foolishness, Mr. Wilkins, don't," for I says, "poor dear old Dizzy ain't no tyrant, and I must say for my part, I'd rather 'ave 'im than Bradlaw, or Dodger, or any of that lot."

Says Wilkins, "They're as good as Disreely any day, as ain't nobody."

"Well," I says, "poor feller, he don't pertend to be, or he'd 'ave changed 'is name, like a many other Ebrer Jews 'as done as 'ave see the horrors of their ways, as the sayin' is, and could 'ave been made a lord, no doubt, and 'ave took Nebbyconnezer for a title; but I 'oners 'im for not bein' ashamed of 'is father, nor yet 'is grandfather neither, as were no doubt in the lead pencil line, or sponges or rubub, like a many more did used to be agin Aldgate Pump, in a beard; as would scorn to be a sham Abraham of a Wiscount, as some calls theirselves; as I've 'eard tell of one party as 'is grandmother were in 'areskin cook line, and 'er 'usban a reglar

old crump, and both transported for bein' in the murder of a sailor, as is wot werry few can boast on, cos as a rule Jews never gets into trouble, cos they don't like bein' sent to prison, and won't go into the workus, where they treats 'em jest like Cristshuns. But for my part, I 'ates them lords and swells as goes about a pertendin' as they're that liberal, and callin' the workin' man their equals, as is all gammon ; and no workin' man with his 'ead on believes that rubbish, as a Lord is goin' to be 'is friend and brother. Cos a real workin' man knows 'is place, and likes to see a gentleman keep 'is, and then looks up to 'im ; but it's when your rubbish comes along a-bouncin', as 'ave been working men theirselves, gets up in the world, and gives theirselves hairs, that the working man laughs, and won't 'ave 'im at no price ; the same as a party as Brown were a-tellin' me about, as were a workin' man at Boltin, or somewheres up there, as thro' bein' a sharp feller, got on, and come up to London, and made parties believe as he were a deal more clever than he really was. Well, he got to be thought some one, and were sent down to inspect the werry factory where he'd worked in 'issel, and 'avin' stuck a fine name on to 'is real name, he walked about a-pertendin' as he knowed nothink of .the works, and wanted them esplained to 'im ; but two or three of 'is old mates spotted 'im,

and had a nice lark over 'im, and called out a old aunt of 'is'n as were at work in the dust-room, as knowed 'im in a munit, and says, " Oh ! my dear Jim, where 'as thou been ? " Brown were there at the time, and told me as he never see a man look sich a fool. Cos, in course it was to 'is credit as he'd made 'is way in the world, if done 'onest, as some doubted ; but in a-tryin' to be a swell, thro' denyin' of the factory, made every one larf 'im to scorn, as the sayin' is.

There's a good many bogus swells, as the Yankees calls 'em, at Brighton, tho' no doubt lots as is true 'arted men and women as 'as made their money, goes there to enjoy it, and means to spend it, and right they are, only wot I 'ates is shams ; like that there bloated builder, old Scrobb, as is only a layin' up a nice stock of gout for the evenin' of 'is days, as the sayin' is ; and then preaps he'll think of 'is poor relations, as nobody didn't ought to neglect, if respectable, cos in course if you gets up in the world, and your own brother's a drunken waggerbone as will disgrace you, why, in course you'd drop 'im, and right too, so long as you don't leave 'im to starve.

But I'm sure you needn't talk of Brighton, for I've see parties a-doin' the grand in London as I've knowed come down to werry low water, and all thro' a-wishin' to cut a dash, as they 'adn't no

right to expect, the same as Kitty Willis, as might 'ave lived and died respectable, but for pride and wanity, as is the pomps of this wicked world, as the sayin' is ; the same as it did with 'er poor gal, cos it's all werry fine a-talkin' about bein' a lady, and 'avin' of everythink fast rate ; but it ain't easy for to do it 'onest, when you ain't born to it, as she never were, for 'er mother and mine was gals together, and she certingly were a pretty gal, as did used to work at the shoebindin' over agin St. George's Church, in the Boro', long afore railroads come in, and 'ad to walk every step of the way twice a-day from close agin Battersea Bridge, when we did used to live in Battersea Rise. She were seven years my junierer, as the sayin' is, and did used to call me Old Martha Sobersides, and parties did used to call 'er Singin' Kitty, for she could sing like the lark. She were not more than fourteen when 'er mother, as were a reg'lar fool over 'er took 'er away from the shoebindin', tho' she only worked at lady's uppers, a-sayin' as it would spile 'er 'ands, as I well remember my dear mother a-sayin', "Never mind, take care as you don't spile 'em for 'onest work."

I think arter that Lucy took to the trombore work, as were all the go, but didn't do much at that, tho' she was always one of them as would dress, and certingly I must own looked well in a

rag, as the sayin' is; and kep 'er 'air werry nice.

When I got married, I lost sight on 'er altogether, tho' I remember my dear mother a-shakin' 'er 'ead over 'er when she came to see me one Sunday arternoon, in a white frock and sandal shoes, and a green silk spencer, as were all the fashion, and a Leghorn 'at.

I knows werry well what a 'ard struggle I 'ad when we fust married, thro' Brown a-helpin' a friend as was one of them sort as 'elped 'isself, for he borrered pretty nigh all as we 'ad, but I'm thankful to think 'ow we fought thro' it, but I certingly sometimes did used to give way, and 'ave a good cry on the quiet, not as ever I let Brown see it, but always shall think as led to my losin' them twins, not but wot they're better off, pretty dears, as the clergyman told me as come and christened 'em, and was berried the werry day as I got down stairs, and lays berried in Stepney Churchyard, as I do 'ope as no railways won't ever go through their graves, the same as Old St. Pancris, as give me quite a turn for to see the dead disturbed like that, tho' in course it's the law of natur, and must be done, the same as St. Martin's agin Cherrin' Cross, as I can remember a-walkin' thro' with a turn gate, like a country church, as is where my grandfather were laid, not to say berried, cos he were carted

away a few years arter up to Camdin town; as broke poor Mrs. Collin's art to see her two children, as 'ad only been berried three months, tore out of their graves by the roots, as the sayin' is, tho' removed quite decent in a 'earse to New Chelsea Church.

But as to Kitty Willis, I must say as I did foel ashamed the fust time as I see 'er when my Joe was jest a twelvemonth old, and I were a-goin' to see my dear mother over in Little Chelsea, as were a long walk from Stepney, a-carryin' a 'eavy boy in July.

For there wasn't no busses in them days for thrippence to take you anywherees, tho' they was runnin' as were a shillin' to the Bank, as I were a-goin' 'ome by.

It were close agin 'Igh Park Corner as I met Kitty, for I was a-settin' a-restin' agin the Park railin's, and a-fannin' myself with my 'ankercher, when she come by dressed out in a musling and a white wale over a blue bonuit.

I shouldn't never 'ave knowned 'er; but she come up all a-smilin', and says, "Dear Old Martha, 'ow dy'e do."

I could but stare, and says, "Law, Kitty, why, it's never you."

She says, "Ain't it tho'. Oh!" she says, "haven't you 'eard as I'm a-goin' to be married to

a officer as doats on me, and would give me gold to eat."

I says, "I'm glad to 'ear it."

"Oh!" she says, "do come and see me, I lives in sich a lovely little cottage near Whitehead Grove, and I'm sure if you wants money or anythink, my Gustus will give it you, or," she says, "I'll let you 'ave it."

I says, "'Ow long 'ave you been married?"

"Oh!" she says, "I'm goin' to be next month, only 'is friends don't like it."

I says, "Wot does your mother say?"

"Oh!" she says, "mother's set up in the stay-makin' business, jest off the Fulham Road; but 'er and Gustus ain't worry good friends, so I don't see much on 'er, but she's got the two gals with 'er, and they're a-doin' worry well, tho' I never sees 'em, Gustus don't like me to."

I says, "Then who lives with you in your cottage?"

"Oh!" she says, "I lives alone, and you must come and see me. Come to-day."

I says, "No," I says, "I'm a-goin' to see my mother."

She says, "Well then, good-bye, and mind you come and bring that fine feller, and I'll pay your coach 'ome."

I says "Good-bye," and she was a-walkin' on

when she turns back, and says, "Martha, you'll excuse an old friend, a-askin' you, but can I 'elp you."

I says, "No," though the word seemed to stick in my throat like, for we was dreadful drove for money, and I were a-goin' over to ask mother to lend us a trifle.

Kitty looked at me werry 'ard, and says, "Come, Martha, don't be proud, take this and pay me back when you like," and she held out two suvrins.

It were as much as I could do not to clutch at 'em like, but I'm thankful to say as I were able to say, "No, thank you, Kitty. I don't want your money."

She says, "Werry well, but, remember, here it is whenever you do." And on she went, a-walkin' as light as a feather, as the sayin' is, and lookin' prettier than ever.

I told mother when I got there all about meetin' 'er, as only said, "Ah, my dear, it's better to be as poor as you are than rich, like Kitty ; and as to 'er mother, she deserves to be fried alive, an old wretch;" and she did not say no more, for my dear mother never were one to backbite nobody, and always said in 'earin' of other people's faults, "Ah, well, I'm sure I've got quite enuf to do to look at 'ome."

I did see Kitty once more arter that, as 'ad got stout, and were dressed out more spicey than ever,

and that were a good many years arter, when Brown and me went down to the Darby at Epsom in Mr. Heafeys shay-cart, and there were Kitty, dressed like a duchess, a-drinkin' out of a silver tankard, in a carridge with a lot of others.

I dropped my wail in passin', thro' not a-wantin' to be knowed, and never set eyes on 'er agin, and never wanted to, but always thought on 'er whenever there was any talk about spiceyness, as were 'er favourite word, poor thing.

It's over twelve year ago now, jest about Christmas time, when I were busy a-gettin' of the 'ouse cleaned, and everythink ready. I'd jest made myself tidy, and were a-thinkin' about tea, a-settin' in my front kitchen, as weren't like a kitchen, tho' a range in it, as is where we did used to take our meals.

The gal was gone for a herrand, and it were a foggy, drizzly day, somethink between a cold thaw and a fog, jest as the lamps was lighted, and I thought as I'd 'ave a muffin, thro' a-'earin' of the bell, as is reglar wintry sound.

I jest opened the door, and took in three pen'-orth, a-meanin' to give the gal a couple, and rather espectin' Mrs. Childs, when jest as I were a-shettin' the door, I 'eard a woman a-singin' a old song as I'd 'eard many a score times, about "Tom Bowlin's a-goin' aloft."

I looks out, and see it were a woman as 'ad got a good big child in her arms.

I says, "Poor creetur! Wot a day to be out, and with a child too, as is a good load to carry." So tho' I don't 'old with them street-singers, I thought as a penny wouldn't do either 'er or me any 'arm; and feelin' thankful as we was a deal better off than Christmas than we ever 'ad been afore, thro' Brown 'avin' 'ad a little property left 'im, besides a-gettin' on thro' takin' up the ingineer; and jest as I were a-goin' to call to 'er, she broke out in "Sally in our Alley."

"Bless my 'art!" I says, "why, that's Kitty Willis's wooice, if she's in this world."

Jest then that gal come in, so I says to her, "Run and give that poor ooman a penny, and ask 'er name."

She runs to 'er, and gives the money, and comes back and says, "She says she ain't got no name, and don't live nowhere's."

I says, "Ask if she'll come and speak to me."

But afore the gal could get to 'er, she were a-'urryin' up the street, and wouldn't say another word.

I was vexed to think as I 'adn't been able to get 'old on 'er, and many a time and oft, as the say-in' is, did I listen for anyone a-singin' in the streets, but never 'eard none, except a one-legged sailor, as

couldn't be Kitty, and them three little children as comes of a Friday alone, and wouldn't tell me nothink about theirselves.

It was jest a twelvemonth arter that as I 'eard as Mrs. Challin were laid up over agin Whitechapel Church, as I went to see, and found 'er werry nigh at 'er last grasp with the bronkitis, as 'ad got a werry tidy back room in a respectable 'ouse, tho' a low kind of a court.

The parish doctor he'd come to see 'er, and told me as she'd do. "As is more," says he, "than I can say of my patient as is two doors off, as is sinkin' for want, and I'm a-goin' to send 'er into the 'ouse."

I says, "Poor thing!"

"Yes," he says, "she's a reglar wreck, and got a nice little boy, tho' he's more than arf-starved."

I says, "Ow orful, to be sure!" And then I says to Mrs. Challin, "Now, as you're better, I'll say good-bye, and come and see you to-morrer;" for she'd got a niece along with 'er as were a 'andy gal, tho' a 'air-lip and a squint.

So off I goes, and 'ad got into the court, and there was the parties come with that there thing as is like a portable bench, for movin' parties to the workus, a-standin' at the door of one 'ouse, and I 'eard a woman say, "It's no use; she won't

go; and I'm sure if you uses force to move 'er, she'll die."

I says, "Wot is it?"

"Oh!" says the woman, "a poor creetur as is dyin', and won't go to the workus."

"Well, then," I says, "if she's a-dyin', why don't they leave 'er in peace?"

"Yes," says the woman, "that's wot I says."

I says, "I think I knows when anyone's a-dyin'; let me see 'er."

She says, "It's the back kitchen, and take care 'ow you goes down."

I've seen many dog'-oles and pig-styes, but never a wuss one than that back kitchen, where that poor creetur were lyin' in a corner, all in the dark.

So I says, "Ain't there no light?"

Says the woman as 'ad follered me down, "Oh yes, for them as can afford to pay for it."

I says, "That's a good soul; get a candle, and 'ere's the money." And give her some hapence, as come back in a few minutes with one stuck in a bottle.

I knowed by 'er breathin' as that poor thing were orful bad, but when I got the light, were struck in 'eaps, for I never see sich a lump of misery as that woman, as 'ad a little child with 'er, as looked up and smiled when it see the light.

I says to the poor woman, "'Ow do you feel?'

She only says, "Death, death ! Oh let me die !
Don't move me."

I says, "You mustn't be left 'ere ; think of the
poor child, and go to the 'ouse till your friends can
be let know."

She set up on the sack as she were a-layin' on,
and pushed 'er 'air off 'er face, and I werry nigh
let the candle drop, for if it wasn't Kitty Willis.

She knowed me in an instant, for she says, "Go
away ; don't look at me."

I says, "Kitty," I says, a-speakin' low like,
"listen to a friend, as will be your friend, and let
'em take you to the workus, and I'll come and see
you, and look arter the child."

She says, "Will you promise me that he shan't
be left there when I'm dead ?"

I says, "I will."

"Then," she says, "I'll go."

And go she did like a lamb, with me a-follerin'
'er. They was a little short with me at fust at the
workus, but thro' me 'avin' knowned Mrs. Colegrove,
as were Mattern at Stepney, we got on better, and
soon was friends. I see that poor creetur clean and
comfortable in bed, and the boy get a good wash
afore I left 'em, a-promisin' as I'd come the next
day ; and so I did, and for many a day arter ; not
as I could do any good to that poor Kitty, as told
me 'ow she'd got married to a feller thro' 'avin' a

bit of money, as 'ad robbed 'er of it, and left 'er with that one boy. She didn't care to tell me much about the past, and I didn't care to 'ear ; but she died werry 'appy, as were a sad end to all her finery and flauntin' ways ; and we got the boy aboard a trainin'-ship, as is doin' well now, thro' bein' a mate, means to get married arter next woyage, and always calls me aunt, tho' no more relation to 'im than the dead, as the sayin' is ; but I've always said to 'im, " Samuel "—as 'is name were Sam—" wotever you are, always 'old up your 'ead, and don't be ashamed of anythink as is 'onest to get your bread by."

But I never was more took aback than seein' Brighton, for if it wasn't for Brill's Baths and the Chain Pier, I'm sure I never shouldn't knowed the place agin, arter more than five-and-forty year, thro' 'avin' throwed open the Pavilion, tho' in course there's George the Fourth a-standin' on the Steen a-starin' at the sea, as I think they might as well 'ave turned 'is back to, thro' a-knowin' he 'ated the sight on it in 'is lifetime. But, law, I'd been that worreted over goin', as I never espected to enjoy myself, for I'm sure the gettin' ready was like so many nails in my coffin, as the sayin' is, let alone the whirl in my 'ead a-bein' wisked thro' the hair like a whirlwind, as tears even trees up by the roots ; so wherever would your 'air be in the West

Inges, where even sugar-canies is blowed down, and ship's sunk in the sight of land ; and in course them blacks don't mind it, thro' their 'air bein' wool, as sticks tight to their 'eads, as is a law of natur, as the sayin' is, jest like sheep ; so I must say as, tho' I didn't care much about goin' out the next day arter gettin' there, yet I wouldn't say me nay to the new skatin' rink, as certingly do them a credit as got it up, like the Cristshul Pallis, as a stout party 'ad a 'and in it, I knowed well as were the bootmaker close agin Drummin's bank at Cherrin Cross, as is where the willin' shot the party by mistake, a-thinkin' as he were Sir Robert Peel, as if that made any difference, the same as them young Larkins came and bonneted me one Satterday night a-turnin' the corner, and then said as they thought it was Mrs. Childs, as certingly is my figger by the back-front view on me, but didn't ought to 'ave 'er crown stove in, for all that, tho' it was a covered shape, as is quite gone out ; but, as I were sayin', that stout party never got over the fire at the Cristshul Pallis ; and 'owever glass and iron could ketch I can't think, and would 'elp to put it out, tho' it was a Sunday, and must 'ave 'ad water on the brain ever arter, for he drownded issself at last off a penny steamer, as is a untimely end for anyone, and as nice a man as ever trod shoe-leather, as the sayin' is, and 'is 'and in 'is pocket to

'elp a friend, as is wot I calls a trump, and it's a pity as there ain't more on em about ; but as to the Cristshul Pallis, it's a 'evanly place, Brown he'd said at fust as he wouldn't come down to Brighton, but give in by the Satterday, and come accordin' ; and glad I was to see 'is old bald 'ead agin, as is a wonderful clear-eaded man for 'is time of life, and I do believe as he knows a somethink about everythink, and I do wish as Queen Wictorier would send for 'im, cos tho' no doubt John Brown, as is always a-waitin' on her, is a good servint, yet thro' bein' always at 'er elber, he can't go about and 'ear things like my Brown, as knows wot is wot agin anyone ; and he were a-tellin' me all about these 'ere forrin pollytics, and 'ow as that old Beastmark is a-tryin' to soap that there Hempror of Roosher, so as to get 'im on 'is side, cos he thinks as them two together could reglar chaw up the rest of the world ; cos they all turns up their nose at old Ingland, a-sayin' as we're a poor mean-sperrited lot, as certingly I must say as we did cut a bad figger a-knockin' under to them Merrykins over that Ally-banner money, as was a reglar swindle somewhere, as the Dook of Wellington wouldn't never 'ave stood in this world, not for all the Yankee Doodles as ever was born or thought on. Not but wot there must be a row some day soon among them forriners, cos in course the Pope ain't a-goin' to be talked to by

that there Beastmark, as wants to tell him wot he ain't to do, and wot he is ; and wotever does Beastmark know about it, as belongs to the Free Church, like Scotland, so didn't ought to interfere with his neighbours, cos look 'ow pleasant the Scotch gets on with their religion, as would bully one another only but for the law, as won't let em, cos among them Scotch everyone wants to believe wot he likes 'imself, and to make 'is naybour believe the same, as is wot they calls liberty of conshence, and wouldn't burn them as don't agree with them, tho' they'd let 'em starve, and turn 'em out of 'ouse and 'ome, as they've done afore now all about the Free Kirk, as they're as bitter over as ever, and won't allow no orgins, cos they likes the sound of their own woices best ; and whyever they don't 'ave the bagpipes in church, I can't think.

Some calls the General 'Semblies as rules the church a set of tyrants, and so, no doubt, they would be, only but for Queen Wictorier bein' the 'ead of it, as would soon put a stop to their little games if they was to carry a joke too fur. I reglar doats on Scotland myself, but thinks as they 'ave their faults over there, but will say as I never did taste sich broth, nor yet hotch-potch, with jams and marmalades, and ale, and cakes, and sweets in gen'ral, with a little whiskey in moderation ; but a wet Sunday in a back street ain't lively in a Scotch

town, tho' in a gen'ral way they makes you jolly. Not but wot the Scotch is a fine people as ever drored the sword, only I must say as I don't care about their kirk, as they calls it ; but if they likes it let 'em go to it, but it don't suit me any more than the Sabbath, which is orful. When Brown he come to Brighton, he were in a nice way about that there ackwaryum bein' shet up of a Sunday, as in course were werry ridiculous, cos if parties don't like to go to it let 'em stop away ; and it's all rubbish them other parties a-tryin' to keep parties at 'ome as always did go out of a Sunday and take their pleasure, and always will ; and 'ave 'eard my dear mother say as when she were a gal there was tea-gardins at Bagnidge Wells, as was crowded, and so were White Conduit 'Ouse when it stood in the fields, and the orgin did used to be played, and 'ole families did used to go out together, partikler of a summer evenin'. That was in good old times afore them Methodists come in, as she never could abear the name on, not but wot she would allow as they did good, cos afore they come along there wasn't no religion at all, and they certingly did wake even the parsons up, as was a sleepy lot in them days ; but then wot I finds fault with is a-goin' to estremes, and not a-lettin' one another alone. Let them as likes chapel go to chapel, or them as prefers it go to church, and let them as

don't go nowheres stop away; cos, for my part, I never could go to church of a evenin' without a-fallin' that fast asleep, as I 'ave been told as my snores was 'eard thro' the orgin. So let's all do as we please is my maxim, and not have no Hacts of Parlymint to drive us to church, nor yet to school neither, except them as ain't got no friends in the world but the parish to fall back upon.

Brown, he went for to see the skating rink, and says to me, "Now, Martha, you did make one mistake over it, and don't you be 'umbugged no more into tryin' on them skates, partikler not down 'ere, cos if you will 'ave a broken limb, or your 'ip out, let it be nearer 'ome."

I says, "You always was a cool 'and, Mr. B——, and all as I can say if I likes to break my bones, or put out both 'ips, I shall be took to a 'ospital," as is noble charities, as I'd trust my life to, not as I'm a-goin' to run no risk at my time of life, as don't want to go to my grave on crutches, nor yet with one foot shorter than the other, as in course, if born so, couldn't be 'elped, and no one to blame; but if, thro' carelessness, the same as Susan Mill's nose, why, in course, you must blame yourself to your dyin' day over it, the same as 'er Aunt Carlton did, as 'ad the care on 'er in infancy, and laid 'er down on the sofy ropped up in a old black shawl, as a party come in and flopped 'issel self down

on the babby, as was orful lusty, and looked like a bundle.

Well, 'er aunt took and come in at the moment, and givin' of a orful scream, flew at 'im for to pull 'im up, as couldn't move 'im, thro' bein' rather in licker and eighteen stun, and 'er 'avin' of a orful stammer, so as she couldn't make 'im understand wot he were a-settin' on; and all as she could do was to run the toastin'-fork into 'im, as made 'im jump up in a jiffey, and the poor little dear as black in the face as a 'at, and its dear little nose all a one side like the button on the washus-door, so in course ain't got no profeel proper, tho' growed up, as is better than Mrs. Laban's dorter near Aldgit Church, as 'ave got a nose like the claw of a lobster, as 'ave shet it in the door with 'er own 'and once or twice, and were insulted gross a-standin' in a crowd to get into the theayter one Satterday night; and if a waggerbone ever so far in front didn't take and give 'er a lot of snuff agin 'er will, all thro' 'er nose a-stretchin' out over parties' shoulders, and then to be called a nasty Jew beast for sneezin' over every one, poor thing, as couldn't in course get at 'er 'andkercher thro' bein' that jammed in the crowd, and as good-natered a gal as you'd meet in the Minories, as the boys did used to lead 'er a nice life over 'er nose, as certingly run in the family, for she'd two aunts and a uncle

as was reglar conkeys, and all 'er brothers and sisters was more or less run out in that direction. But as I always says, we didn't make ourselves, and a nice mess we should 'ave made of it if we 'ad ; for to see the objecs as parties makes theirselves in dressin' alone, wot with a-turnin' of their airs yaller, and a-powderin' of their noses ; not but wot a little dress is wot we all on us requires, even down to naked savidges, as goes in for beads and feathers to cover theirselves with ; and whyever they wasn't born with coats on their backs, like bears and lions, always puzzles me, as in course can't dress in the wilderness, where there's no shops, nor yet even pedlars as comes round in them wild parts like up at the North Pole.

Brown, he were that full of this 'ere Harctic Expedition, as I can't see no pull in myself; but Brown, he says it shows wot trumps the British Navy is, as will be up to anythink as they're told, and if Queen Wictorier were to say as she should like to know wot's the other side of the moon they'd try to sail round it some'ow. I says, "That's all werry fine, Brown ; but," I says, "it ain't right for to go and take a man away from 'is 'ome and 'is fireside jest to see 'ow cold it can be up there, and whether there's a thoroughfare. No, it's all werry well if you can do any good, as I 'eard of a French mishunary as went all over them parts, and a lot

more along with 'im, for to look arter them poor benighted creeturs as only sees daylight about four times a year."

But wotever the British Navy can want a-goin' a-pokin' about that Pole, I can't think, escept walers, as goes to them outlandish places; but as to sailors, why, they can't sail werry far thro' hice-bugs, and polar bears, and all manner like that, as was intended by natur to keep us out from them parts; as is reglar wastin' of the real British tar; and if them savongs, as the French calls em, wants to make out a short cut somewheres, they'll find as the longest way round is the shortest way 'ome, as the sayin' is; and that's wot I said to Miss Pil-kinton, as were a-goin' on about the Jogryfal Society; I says, "Let 'em guess at it, as can set at 'ome over their fires and look at their maps, and not send men to sacrifice their lives with their wives and families, jest for to foller a ideer; and 'ow Queen Wictorier can allow 'er ships and sailors to be used like that, I can't think, cos if the Jogryfal Society wants to know wot there is a-'angin' to that Pole, I can tell 'em, lots of icicles; and if the Yankees wants to know, let 'em go and see theirselves; and as to us a-goin' too, why, I considers it ain't nothink but bounce, like boys a-doin' one another's dags."

I ain't no patience with it, sich rubbish, par.

tikler now as we've got these ere skatin' rinks to keep up skatin' on, so if hice and snow were done away with altogether, nobody wouldn't care, cos we've got freezin' machines for to make hices with, and in my opinion there's a deal too much of them hice drinks a-goin' on, as'll spile the stomach if over done, jest like the Merrykins, as ain't got no digestions left, wot with drinkin' hice things and chewin' tobaccer, with ardint sperrits constant, and no wonder they're the wizen-wisaged, 'errin'-gutted lot as they are, for they don't give theirselves a chance not from mere boys, when they goes on jest for all the world as if they was growed up.

Tho' in course skatin' rinks will be werry good places for parties as is a-goin' up that there Pole to practise on, so as they'll be able to skate all the way, like them Dutch, as don't mind where they skates to, and ain't a bit afeared of fallin', thro' bein' born to it.

I 'ave 'eard say as parties 'as 'ad nasty falls thro' them skatin' rinks, as is slippery places, partikler for ladies, as don't keep a sharp look out ; cos I never sha'nt forget the fust time as I went to one, and 'ad a fearful fall, as nearly brought the 'ole place down, and the party as kep it said as he'd rather give me money to keep out any time, as was like 'is impidence a-talkin' like that to a lady, jest

because she 'appened to slip like a many others 'as done afore 'er, and will do arter 'er.

I do think as that there skatin' got reglar on my brain arter that fall, for when out a-walkin', I often gives a slip as made Miss Pilkinton that short in 'er temper, as I were a-walkin' along with, and downright abusive, thro' me 'appennin' to slip one day as I think must 'ave been a bit of oringe peel, as 'ave broke many a back afore now, and might 'ave been Mrs. Arber's death, thro' a-dcin' of a unlawful thing, as no one didn't ought to be found out in, tho' it's like smugglin', as nobody don't see no 'arm in; as were when 'er own sister were in trouble, with the brokers in the 'ouse, if she didn't bring away lots of things under 'er shawl, and one evenin' had a glass jug and a cheyney one tied round 'er waist under 'er dress, and slipped in goin' down them steps, and fell with sich a crash as the man in perscession, as were a-showin' of 'er out, thought as it were 'er back bone broke to shivers; and run up the street for 'elp, as give them time to get the plate basket, with the silver tea-pot and family Bible out of the 'ouse while 'is back were turned; and when he come back with the doctor, as lived at the corner, with a green and red lamp over 'is door, Mrs. Arber 'ad lewanted with the glass jug, as was cut, not 'urt, and only the 'andle off the cheyney one, as would rivet equal to new;

but might 'ave give 'er a death wound, with a lock jaw.

"Well, Miss Pilkinton says, a'oldin' of me up, "You'd jest do for the skatin' rink, with your light figger, and your slippy ways."

"Well," I says, "I 'ave been there and still would go, as the sayin' is; and why not, as must be fit for any one to be seen at now, as the Princess of Wales 'ave patternized it; as will be a fine thing for 'er boys, as she can let go out a-skatin', and no more ankshus than if they was a-playin' crokey, and not arf so dangerous as football, as 'ave killed a many; nec as you can stop any of them games, cos you don't want boys to be a set of muffs, for it's them games in boy'ood as makes sejers and sailors of 'em when they comes to be men, as won't turn tail for fear of a gun shot, nor yet a cannon ball a-mcetin' them arf way, as I'm sure can't come 'arder than a cricket ball, as caught me between the bladebones, in Kenninton Oval, years ago, with a bruise the size of a cheese-plate, as my mother well remembers all fields, when Woxall Gardins was all the go, and lords and ladies did used to go there, as was only a shillin' admission; and could remember Ranelar, as was close agin Woxall Bridge, long afore it was built, as parties did used to go to by water; as can well remember myself, when quite a gal, a-goin' myself from Chelsea to

Woxall Bridge in a-rowin' boat, afore busses and cabs were thought on."

Miss Pilkinton she've got about as ugly a foot as you see in a day's walk, a reglar beadle crusher, as the sayin' is, so when we went to the skatin' rink, she wouldn't 'ave a pair of skates on, and never stopped a-goin' on at me, jest for tryin' 'em, and if I did fall, as I said afore, it didn't 'urt nobody, not even my own back; so nobody didn't ought to complain.

But law, bless you, Miss Pilkinton, she couldn't let it drop, as the sayin' is, as said with a sneer, as I should be a-goin' on stilts next, and wot a pity I didn't try the tight rope, as was insultin' jeers from a friend, but I didn't take no notice, thro' a-feelin' as it were all 'er spite, cos I wouldn't stand them 'umbugs, Moody and Sankey, as she wanted me to go to one evenin' I says, "No! never, as is a couple of hignorant men, a-pertendin' to teach wot they don't understand;" and when she come ome without 'er watch and chain, and three pounds gone, as she 'ad in a portmonee, she never said a word to me, any more than young 'Amber did to 'is father, as lost over five pounds and 'is return railway ticket from Scotland, leastways, he said as it were at Moody and Sankey's, as he'd been robbed, but I 'as my doubts, tho' 'is own uncle and aunt, as is werry strick, met 'im in the

'Aymarket about twelve o'clock, the day arter he come to town, as said as he'd jest come out of Moody and Sankey, where he 'ad 'is pockets reglar rifled, as the sayin' is ; as give the old lady quite a turn, cos she's one of them dear, good souls, as can't abear to think as there's any wickedness in them as attends chapel, and 'ad better not trust 'er own brother-in-law, as is a deakin, and robbed every one in the naybourood, and would 'ave took in 'is own minister if he 'adn't been too sharp, as give 'im in charge over a forged cheque, as sent 'im to Portland for two years, and left as nice a little woman as ever I see, to pretty nigh starve, with two children, as she would 'ave done, but for kind friends, as come forard when 'er parents turned their backs on 'er ; a good-for-nothin' willin' to come and take a decent man's dorter away from a good 'ome ; and only went to that chapel as a cloak, thro' a-thinkin' as they 'ad money, as he never touched a farden on, cos they wouldn't 'ear of 'im, thro' belongin' to the Peace Society, and 'im in the volunteers, as called 'issel a capting, and only a cadger of a feller as picked up a livin' by swindlin' ; and would leave 'er at 'ome to starve while he were a-livin' on the fat of the land, as ho'd go tick for, and let in a poor waiter as I knowed, thirty shillin's and more, for green peas and sparrergrass, as ain't necessaries of life ; and then threatened to knock

that poor waiter down, as went to ask 'im for a trifle of it, thro' jest bein' come out of the 'ospital, as distress 'ad brought 'im to ; but couldn't bounce me as brought the willin's nose to the grindstone, thro' a-goin' myself to where he'd got work, and told 'is employers, as would 'ave sacked 'im on the spot, only he promised five shillin's a week, as he paid for five weeks, and then were took up for forgery, as I were a-sayin', and must be out of Portland by this time ; so parties, especially waiters, 'ad better look out, for he'll be at 'is swindlin' game agin.

In course, it don't do to be a-goin' on at any one's religion, as may be a good one, tho' them as follers it don't act up to it, as is the way with a many as goes to Moody and Sankey, cos no one wouldn't go and say as they was in any swindle, and in course can't 'elp thieves a-gettin' into the place, but I do think as they did ought to stop parties a-goin' from 'ouse to 'ouse in their names, as is a great liberty, and many on 'em downright imposters, the same as one that came to call on poor Mrs. Mealey, as is only quite young, and a babby under the month, and 'er that weak, as she can't 'ardly speak, without a-bustin' into tears over it, as ain't got anythink to cry for, thro' 'im bein' a steady man, with his four pounds a week, constant employmint, and the infant, though small, is

'ealthy, and will do well enuf if not over fed. Well, poor thing, she'd only been on the sofy two days, when a fieldmale, a great 'orse godmother of a thing, come to the door and said as she'd some-think very important to tell 'er, and as the party as were a-nussin' 'er were in the back room with the infant as wanted management, the girl showed this fieldmale in to 'er missus. It so 'appened as I called in just arter 'er, and as I always walks straight in, thro' 'avin been with 'er, poor thing, thro' all 'er trouble, in I goes, and were surprised to 'ear a loud wooice, and to smell brandy and water.

As I opened the door, this old 'arpie 'ad 'er back to me, with a smokin' tumbler on the table, and I could see as poor Mrs. Mealey were as faint as a dog, for she looked as white as a candle, and were all of a tremble, and I 'eard this old thing a-sayin' as all must perish as didn't listen like Nore's ark. Well, I guessed wot were up, for I'd 'ad one on 'em a-rappin' at my door the week afore; so I didn't say a word, but goes in, and takes up the tumbler as was nearly full, and says, "My good friend, step into the parlour with me," and walks out of the room.

When she sees as I'd been and collared the grog, the old gal were up in a instant, and says, "Friend, give me that drink, as is necessary to save my life, as am subjec to convulsions."

I says, "All right, come with me;" and down I

went, and shoves open the parlour door, and says, “Step in ‘ere.”

She foller'd, and I says to the gal, “Ask Mrs. Crumley,” as is the nuss’s name, “jest to step up to your missus.”

I ‘adn’t let go the tumbler, and stuck to it, as the sayin’ is, and I says to that woman, as was the most raw-boned old mortal as ever I set eyes on and more like a thief than a ‘orse, as the sayin’ is, I says to her, “Now you step it, or I’ll give you in charge; ‘ow dare you come into any one’s ‘ouse like this, as may ‘ave pocketed a spoon, like the woman down Ratcliff ’Ighway last week.”

She says, “I’ve a message of peace.”

“Well, thin,” I says, “you’ll go and give it in the station-‘ouse if you don’t be off.”

She says, “Oh, you wiper! Oh, you’ve killed me!” and she put out ‘er ‘and for the tumbler.

I says, “No, you don’t, thank you. There’s the door, and if ever I ketches you in any one’s ‘ouse agin, I’ll give you in charge.”

She glared frightful, and begun a-sayin’ as I were given over, and all manner like that; so I says, “You jest keep a civil tung in your ‘ead, or I’ll give you over, so walk your chalks, and no more gammon.”

She were a-goin’ to be abusive, but a perlice-man were a-passin’ at the moment as I got ‘er to

the door, so out she walked, and went straight up to 'im, and begun a-sayin' somethink, but I were glad to see as he cut 'er werry short, so off she went.

Poor Mrs. Mealey 'ad pretty nigh fainted when Mrs. Crumley went into the room, and she told me she never were so frightened, for that woman 'ad 'elped 'erself to the brandy and water, and kep' on a-talkin' about brans and the burnin'. So all as I got to say to Moody and Sankey, "No doubt you thinks as you're right and doin' good, but your follerers is wrong, and you didn't ought to allow no follerers. Cos in course you ain't a-goin' about a-eatin' and drinkin', and livin' on the fat of the land, with carrides and 'orses, like some as preaches the Gospil, to a werry nice tune, with four meals a-day, and the best of everythink, and don't want a seckertary to rite your letters, but 'ave left your comfortable 'omes to come 'ere to misery, as don't get a meal's wittles once a week, and drinks nothink but water, and sleeps werry little, often on the bare boards, to give up your beds to them as is poor or in sickness, so there can't be no doubt as you ain't a-doin' of it for money nor yet a livin', but only for to do good, as is werry beautiful, jest like Mr. Sproutley, as preaches lovely, and wouldn't 'ave a fine 'ouse only jest to please 'is congregation, and only rides in 'is carridge cos they won't let 'im walk, and as to dinner, nothink 'ardly but cold meat

with arf a pint of fourpenny ale when wore out with preachin', as 'is only pleasure in life is tea, and only goes out to dine with them as 'ave grand 'ouses and gives fust-class wittles, because they 'as prayers afore breakin' up. Cos there is parties as makes a reglar trade of religion, and a good one too, as may be a-eatin' of the bread of idleness, as the sayin' is, in the lap of luxury, and then say as they're a-preachin' the gospel, as is a-deceivin' of theirselves as well as others, and brings religion into redicule, as is the reason as them tens of thousands of costers and ruffs in the East-end ain't no religion at all, and I 'ave eard say as in Scotland werry often religion is parties as 'ave got a good coat on their backs and is well-to-do in the world, as can set and 'ear long sermins and 'ave them argymints over Free Kirk and Mother Church, and all manner like that, as poor people don't understand nothink about, and wouldn't be no better for if they did, as wants to be showed their dooty and 'ow to do it, as most men is quite as ignorant as the beasts in the fields, as the sayin' is."

But as I were a-sayin', when we got back 'ome, I wonder as them skatin' rinks, takes so well in Brighton, I wonder as they don't 'ave 'em all over London.

Says Miss Pilkinton, as was a-teain' along with me, "That's wot they are a-doin'."

I says, "Oh ! indeed ! "

She says, "Certingly, as 'ave no doubt 'eard of Prince's."

"Yes," I says, "I have, and see 'em too, and partikler that there Prince Arthur, as I've see a-marchin' at the 'ead of 'is regynint, thro' the streets of Dover, as bold as a lion let out of 'is den, as did my art good to see 'im, and," I says "there ain't no fear of no French, nor yet Beastmark neither, a-darin' to land as long as we've got sojers like 'im, as would shed his last drop of blood for Old England, and 'is royal ma, as is why she feels that 'appy and light-artered, and can go up to Scotland and anywherees else, well a-knowin' as she've got three noble sons as will keep a eye on the main chance, as is in course, the harmy and navy."

Says Miss Pilkinton, a-speakin' jeery like, "When you've quite done, pre'aps you'll listen, for I were not illudin' to them royal brothers, as is Britin's 'opes, but to Prince's, as is a club where all the fust in the land goes for to amuse theirselves."

"Oh !" I says, "in course, that's where the ladies all got a-fallin', thro' a-skatin' about too free. Ah !" I says, "parties did ought to be careful in them slippery places, and I've 'eard say as clubs is bad places for married men, as idles

away their time, and get a-playin' cards, and all manner."

"Yes," says Miss Pilkinton, "and I ain't no patience with that Poler ground."

"Ah!" I says, "that's where the bears come from."

"Law," she says, quite short, "it ain't nothink to do with bears, but is a game as parties is all mad arter."

"Well, then," I says, "I suppose it's that as 'ave took 'em all up to them Arctic regions, cos it's all Poler there, and parties there is as'll go anywherees for their sport; as some will set up to their necks in them long boots, in pools of water all night, for to shoot snipe by day-light."

She says, "Dear me, Mrs. Brown, why, the Poler ground is out Brompton way, at Lilly Bridge, as they plays it on ponies."

I says, "A werry dangerous game to play at, I should say. I don't 'old with no tricks on bridges, partikler them suspension bridges, as 'ave give way with too great a crowd, and I'm sure I've made that one at Clifton, as did used to stand at 'Ungerford Market, shake agin with my weight, only with me a-crossin' over it."

Miss Pilkinton, she only give a toss of 'er 'ead, and went on with 'er tea.

I says, "Do tell me somethink more about them skatin' rinks as is in town."

She says, "There ain't no gettin' in a word hedgeways where you are."

"Well," I says, "I'm one as knows when to talk, and when to 'old my tung, and am all attention to what you ve got to say."

"Well, then," she says, "there's sev'ral skatin' rinks from Prince's down to Brixton."

"What?" I says, "where the treadmill did used to be, as were called the 'Ouse of Correction, not as parties ever come out of it much corrected, for when once in there, they come out wuss thieves than ever; not but wot I remember a-finishin' school for young ladies, as come out reglar tip-top swells, as learnt dancing, and deportment, as means 'ow to carry yourself, and 'ad a carriage kep to learn 'em 'ow to get in and out with ease, as were the school Miss Allbin come from, as run away with 'er uncle's black footman, as 'ad come 'ome from the West Ingess, and were cort a-gettin' into a 'ackney coach in Southampton Row, close agin Bedford Square, as is where 'er uncle lived, and were brought back with 'er things in a bundle, and sent off to a boardin' school in forrin parts, and that black waggerbone, he were sent back to the West Ingess, as no doubt they made pickle mangoes on; for he weren't 'eard on no more, and she married a

Germin count, as they do say threw 'er out of a three pair back on to a regymint of sojers, as was marchin' by with their bagginets fixed, as broke 'er fall, tho' disfiggered for life, with 'er 'ip out, as only shows wot comes of disobedience to parints, as I told my Mary Ann when Joe Barnes shied the coffee pot at 'er 'ead, as it would come 'ome to 'er, not but wot he'd made 'er a werry good 'usban' on the 'ole, tho' I never shall care for 'im nor 'is children neither, as 'ave all got 'is squint, and you'd say 'ad made free with 'is legs, as Brown 'ave only jest shook 'ands with, but nothink more; but as I always say, as he ain't a-goin' to notice no quarrels 'twixt 'im and Mary Ann, as it's their busyness, and they gets on werry well with five children, and don't 'ave no rows now, as he's too well off in the world, and if he wouldn't talk pollytics, Brown might put up with 'im occasional, but really he does talk such downright rubbish over 'is rights of labour, that you can't set with patience and 'ear 'im. Brown, he 'ave put 'im down over and over agin, partikler one night over supper, at 'is own brother's, by sayin', "You talk about workin' men, my good feller, as if the masters 'ad no rights at all, jest be so kind as to tell us wot you consideris is due to masters." So Joe, in course, made a ass of 'issel, a-sayin' as workin' men is slaves, as no one in their senses

wants workin' men to be slaves, no more than their feller-creeturs, but their masters don't want to be slaves neither, as no Brittins never will be, neither servants nor masters ; so jest to change the subjec, I says, " I certingly should like to see one of them skatin' rinks, partikler them London ones."

Says Miss Pilkinton, " No doubt, if you was to go to Prince's, and say as you was Mrs. Brown, they'd let you in."

I see she were a-jeerin', so I says, " No doubt they've let in them as I'm the betters of, for that matter ; but," I says, " we won't quarrel over that," and I didn't say no more, cos I see that she were in a jeery humour, as would end bad, cos she's one of them as can't abear to be jeered at back agin, and will lose 'er temper over the least bit of chaff, as I certingly do pity 'er, for she 'ave been made that fool on by so many of them fellers as 'ave thought as she'd a bit of money, as cheered off on learnin' as it were a thousan' poun's tied up in the Stocks, as died with 'er, thro' a-goin' to 'er brother's children, and only brings 'er thirty-two poun's fifteen a year, as would be fifty in ingle railroads ; but 'er trustee won't 'ear of takin' it out of the Stocks, a-sayin', " fast bind, fast find," as the sayin' is ; and I do believe as that party as took 'er to Moody and Sankey's 'ad a 'and in 'er bein' robbed of 'er watch and portmoney, cos 'ow else could he 'ave knowed as

she'd got it in 'er side pocket, jest under 'er waist-band, for she put it there before she left the 'ouse, with the money in 'er glove for the bus, and she said as no one but 'im put 'is arm round 'er waist at Moody and Sankey's, as he said were for convenience in lookin' over the same 'im-book, as were when he looked 'er in the face that tender as she see a tear a-glistenin' in 'is eye, and felt 'im press 'er to 'is 'eart, a-singin' out the words, "In bonds of love for ever," as made a many sob, and she missed 'er puss within five minnits in breakin' up, as they went downstairs. So in course shc's a little bit soured, as he never kep 'is appintment to meet 'er the follerin' Sabbath-evenin' at the City Temple, as stands on the Wiaduck, as she were a-waitin' at the doors afore they was open. The same as Mrs. Bilders, as kep company with a serous grocer's young man, and was always out together at them chapels, and went to see 'er sister-in-law at Egham, as 'ad words and parted, and she come 'ome unespected Saturday night, and tho't she'd go for to 'ear Spurgin on the Sunday-evenin', a-thinkin' as that serous young man were gone to see a aunt as he'd got especiations from at Bedford, as is were Bunions come from, and who should she see the fust thing in the front row of Spurgin's gallery but that taller-faced believer, with 'is 'ead a-leanin' on a young gal's shoulder, as were a-singin' off 'is 'im-book.

She were a woman of sperrit, and no fool, Mrs. Bilders, so she got round to the door as he were a-comin' out by, and she grips 'old of 'im tight by the arm, and says, "Is this your sister?"

He says "Yes; leastways, I means no."

Says the young gal, "Are you 'is grandmother?"

"No," says Mrs. Bilders; "we're to be married next Toosday week."

The young gal give a shriek, but it were larfter, as she says, "Good night, old Sobersides, as met me in the Boro' Road this evenin' jest before six, and perswaded me to go to a place of woship with 'im, a cantin' blackguard," and off she turned one way, as Mrs. Bilders went the other, and that feller he come a-sneakin' arter 'er, a-sayin',

"Kesiah, do not judge me 'arsh."

She says, "Look 'ere, my fine fellow, if you dares foller me, I'll give you in charge, and if ever you comes to my door agin, I'll shy a pail of water over you for a dirty, sneakin', good-for-nothink 'ipper-crit. So be off."

So I never says nothink for to errytate poor Miss Pilkinton, as'll go on a-ravin' about the men bein' a base sect till she werry nigh foams at the mouth. But as I wanted for to see one of them London skatin' rinks, I went by the underground railway to Sloane Square, thro' a'-earin' as there were

one close by, as in course is the werry spot for it, thro' bein' that close to the swells, as likes to 'ave their pleasures 'andy. I see it rote up agin a wall, as it were opin every evenin'. So I jest went up to the door, and asked if it were opin to the public, as the party says, "Yes, mum," that perlite, and says, "wouldn't you like for to walk in and give a look round ? "

I says that I should, thro' 'avin' 'eard say as it's a fine exercise winter and summer, and one as I don't 'old with on hice, thro' the frost not a-lastin' no time, as they did used to with a ox roasted 'ole on the Tems, but now in gen'ral is all broke up in the fust night, and brought away in donkey carts, so ain't to be trusted to bear anyone, tho' in course costers must live like the rest on us ; and I'm sure that's a 'ard earned crust, a-gettin' of hice off the ponds, as in course stops the skatin' ; and I'm sure were nearly the death of poor Mrs. Waller, as lived next door to me, and were only confined a week when 'er eldest went out a-slidin' as were only jest eleven, and a nice-lookin' boy, but a pickle, as come in a-sayin' as he'd been stripped of 'is great coat by ruffs, as was takin' hice in the canal, as give 'is poor mother sich a turn as flew to 'er 'ead, and 'er life dispaired on for two days, and the lyin' young rascal 'ad been and took 'is coat off for to slide more free, and put down behind a post, as he couldn't

find in the dark, and then 'atched up that story, as were soon found out when 'is father went to the station 'ouse about it, for the perlice 'ad picked up the coat.

So 'is father took and warmed 'im well in the back washus, as in my opinion were wot upset 'is mother, as could 'ear 'is screams, and got out of bed to save 'im, and would 'ave been down in the washus the next minnit, if I 'adn't 'appened jest to drop in and 'elped the nuss 'old 'er, as fought with us like tigers, and could only be got to get into bed agin when I 'ollered down stairs "fire!" as brought Waller up in double quick time, as got it 'ot from all three of us, and ruined that boy, for he run away to sea, as broke 'is mother's 'art within two years, as it were a 'appy release, for she were never strong; and Waller married a arf-cast under the twelmonth, as ill-used the fust family, as their grandmother took away and kep till 'er dyin' day.

So they never knowed the want of a mother; and Waller took to drinkin' and so did the arf-cast, as settled both their 'ashes within five years, and only one treacle-coloured babby, as never lived thro' it's 'igh teeth.

I walked all about that there rink, as is werry nice, and it looked to me as if they'd been and put down asfelt for parties to skate on, as is beautiful

and smooth, as were a-bein' rubbed down constant by men with road-scrapers.

I see rote up agin a alley as led into the rink as skaters was to foller one course, so I says to myself, tho' not a-skater, "I'd better go thro' that way," and so I did, and met full butt, as the sayin' is, two young parties as was a-comin' skatin' along, 'and in 'and, as looks werry pretty and lovin' like, tho' I think these two was brother and sister; but we met with that suddin' collusion as sent them back'ards, a-flyin' thro' that passidge like the wind, as we met in, and it's lucky as that young man 'old 'is sister up, and them wheels on the skates runs easy either way, back'ards or for'ards, so they both on 'em spun back, tho' werry nigh over. They was werry perlite in polergisin' to me, and there weren't no 'arm done, cos I kep that firm on my legs, and they kep clear of my feet, as is my tender pint, and no doubt my fault in a-goin' thro' the wrong way.

It certingly is a werry nice amusement, that skatin', for them as is young and active, and a party as were in there, he told me as it would be fine hexercise for me. I didn't tell 'im as I'd tried my luck at 'em once at Brighton, and come sich a cropper as I feels now, partikler with that nasty swimmin' in the 'ead, as I'm took with that suddin' as some says is my stomach; but in course I knows

my 'ead from my stomach, but fancies must be the end on me some day; but, law bless us! we must all 'ave a somethink to take us off, as it's as well as we should keep our eye on constant.

Them gentlemen at the rink were that perlite that I do think as they'd 'ave been proud and 'appy if I'd 'ave spent the day there, as no doubt could 'ave gct refreshments, as must be to be 'ad quite 'andy, and in course, when the weather sets in cold, they'll 'ave brandy and peppermint a-bein' sold along with 'ot elder, the same as did used to be when the Serpentine were froze over that 'ard as a wan drored by four 'orscs were drove over it.

This 'ere rink as I were a-lookin' at is most full of a evenin', jest like Canader and 'Merryker, where they're all lighted up, with a band a-playin', and hice that thick as you couldn't cut with a 'atchet, nor yet saw thro' with a saw. I were pleased to see that rink, and as I 'adn't been in them *parts for years, as is close agin Chelsea 'Ospital, as I knowed well when a gal, as there's a picter on of the Dook of Wellington a-ridin' down for to tell them old Chelsea penshuners as he'd been and won the Battle of Waterloo, as were kind in 'im, and pleased them old men, as is no doubt noble old wetterans, as the sayin' is, and certingly I never knowed a wetter un than old Brownlei, for he were never sober, and as to some of them old sojers, they

ain't much good, not even them as 'ave been sargin's and corporals, and can well remember my dear mother a-tellin' me about a old Major as she lived 'ousemaid to out 'Ounslow way. He'd been a gay bird, he 'ad, when young, and now as he'd growed old and took a turn serous, thro' a jinin' of them Metherdists, as was all the go in them days; but like a many as goes from one estreme to the other, he did go on, for she'd 'eard say as a bigger middle-aged blackgard 'adn't never lived, leastways that's wot come out, for he'd been and married a young lady over in Ireland, as wasn't legal, and if he didn't take and desert 'er and 'er boy, as come 'ome to 'im nicely jest at the werry time as mother lived with 'im. For the black-'arted willin', when he found as 'is fust marridge weren't legal, 'ad been and married agin a middle-aged party as were that serous, and a fine fortin to be serous on, and as they lived in style, but always cold dinners of a Sunday, as is all right enuf when you ain't got servints to do the work, or where you keep but one; besides, they'd use the carriage to go and 'ear some fancy preacher, as were Rowlin 'Ill.

Well, this 'ere old Major, he give it 'is friends 'ot over religion, and did used to go to parties with 'is Bible in 'is pocket, and preach away arter dinner, and hevery one were a-sayin' if ever there was a saint it was 'im. Mother says as she always said as

he were too fond of port wine, and toppin' up with brandy and water, for a saint.

Well, he went on a-swillin' and a-preachin', till one fine day a lady come to the door with a young lad, as mother answered herself and see her, and says she looked that pale and werry shabby, and if it wasn't that old willin's lorful wife in Ireland, but not in Ingland.

That good-for-nothink reptybate took and 'ad the door shet in 'er face, tho' she told 'im she were starvin', and the boy as was with 'er. Mother never 'card no more, for she soon arter that married and went into the laundry line; but she 'eard of that there Major from time to time, 'ow 'is children, for he'd three, 'ad been always sickly, and died one arter the other.

Tho' he were sich a brute to 'is own flesh and blood as to leave that poor boy and 'is mother to starve, yet he were fond of these others, tho' he 'ated their mother, as led 'im a dog's life, but as she 'eld the puss-strings, as the sayin' is, he were obliged to be'ave 'issel proper.

It were years arter mother 'ad left 'im, for I was a big gal, there was a orful murder committed by a sojer, a young man, and if he wasn't that old Major's son, as never knowed as he was alive till he saw it in the paper as he was a-goin' to be 'ung. All 'is preachin' and prayin' give way, and he took to

drinkin' like a fish, as were 'is end, and my dear mother did used to go to see 'is widder, as provided for the other poor creetur, and 'adn't never knowed of 'er esistence till it all come out over the murder.

It were a-walkin' by Chelsea 'Ospital as put me in mind of it all, for a old Irish penshuner as did used to come and see mother at Battersea 'ad been feller-servint with 'er at that Major's, and was turned away cos he knowed too much, and didn't care about prayers, and would let out when he were a little bit on all as he knowed about the Major's goin's on, for he'd been 'is orderly, as they calls it over in Injercr, which is wot the Major never could 'ave been, or he wouldn't never 'ave be'aved that base to a poor woman as 'ad trusted him, as ain't like a sojer, nor yet a gentleman, as every sojer did ought to be.

But, law, 'ow things is altered, to be sure ; and as to Cheyney Walk, you wouldn't 'ardly know it now-a-days, as was that quiet, old-fashioned place, with trees along it, when I were a gal, and Cre-morne were a gentleman's 'ouse, all a-goin' to rack and ruin, but that retired, as you might think your-self at the world's end ; as, indeed, you was, for there was the "World's End" public-'ouse stood at the corner of the lane, close agin Knight's Gar-dins, as fast growed them kermellias, as is sich lovely flowers, tho' more like wax than natur, in my opinion, yet looks nice in the 'air with a dark com-

plexion. Not but wot Miss Pilkinton made a reglar objec' of 'erself with five in a row, as was made of muslin, and stuck round a black 'at, a-goin' to the Alesander Pallis, as we made a party to, thro' never 'avin' been but once, as were afore it opened, so got to the gates to be turned back, as were cuttin' of a ignominerous figger, as were burnt to the ground within a week or two arter, but now 'ave rose like a Felix from its own hashes, as the sayin' is, as lays werry convenient for them as lives Islington way; not but wot poor Mr. Alder and all 'is family, includin' 'er in a deliket state, as went down there at Whitsuntide, and got stuck in the train the other side 'Ornsey, and never got 'ome till four in the mornin', and 'ad to walk nearly three miles a-carryin' of the twins, as is just two, and all the others a-angin' on to 'is coat-tails a-cryin' with sleep, and 'er nearly faintin' at every step, and did ought to 'ave been ashamed of 'erself a-goin' out, but always was a fool, and no wonder as the infant died, as certingly was no loss, where there's seven a'ready in less than nine years, and did 'ope as the twins was the last, tho' a steady man, and can earn over three pounds a week, and never spent a shillin' out of 'is 'ome or away from his family in ten years of married life, as is more than a many 'usbans and fathers can say with a clear conshence.

“But now, in course, as it ain't Whitstuntide,”

as I says to Mrs. Padwick, "why, in course we shan't meet with no obstructions on the lines." So we settled as it should be on a Toosday; for I don't like Monday, thro' so many makin' olliday, as 'ave in gen'ral spent their money by Toosday, as sobers the best on us; and if I'd my way, I'd 'ave a law to punish them as makes beasts of theirselves over their 'ollidays, and kicks up a riot, jest like a set of low-live wretches as lives at the back of Miss Pilkinton, as 'aven't been sober for a week, a-riotin' over death, the wretches, thro' a poor gal bein' drownded, as was, no doubt, shoved into the water, and not found for a week; and then these beasts to set to, and be constant drunk over 'er coffin; why, there did ought to be a law to take sich parties up; and I'd 'ave a wisitin' magistrat, as should go round with the perlice, so as to see there weren't no unfair play, like naybours bein' spiteful, nor the perlice a-bullyin'; and I'd jest go into the 'ouses and fetch them wretches out, and give em bread and water for a week and 'ard labour for a month, till I cured 'em, as is nearly all them waggerbones as gets their bread thievin', cadgin', and beggin', as 'angs about church-doors, and goes all among the carridges at the West-end, a-pretendin' to be a-sellin' of flowers, and imposes on kind-artered ladies, with always a babby in their arms, as should 'ear their langwidge when they dare open their lips.

I'd 'ave every one as begs took up, and inquired into, as if real objecs did ought to be relieved, whilst them as is impostors did ought to get it 'ot, as is drunk best part of their time, and lives on the fat of the land, as the sayin' is, whilst them as works 'ard can't 'ardly get a crust, let alone a drop of beer, poor souls, as is chiefly tea they lives on, and obligated to go into the 'ouse, when a shillin' or two out-door relief would keep body and soul together, as the sayin' is; and it's thro' them impostors as people gets sick of the poor altogether.

But I must say as I did enjoy that day as we spent at the Alesandrer Pallis, as is named arter the Princess of Wales, and well she may be proud on it, for it is a lovely spot, and close agin Wood Green, as is the place where them four noble volunteers, with guns in their 'ands, stood quietly by and see a willin' murder 'is wife, and never interfered, but got out of 'is way, for fear as he should 'urt them, as no doubt he would, cos the 'ole four couldn't 'ave been not arf a tailor, as it takes nine on 'em to make a man, tho' I 'ave knowed tailors as was brave as lions in their way, tho' I knowed one as 'is wife did used to beat like a stock-fish, as in course ain't a wife's dooty; but yet when a man will drink 'issel foolish, and make away with the children's clothes, as well as 'is own, for to get

licker, why, in course a woman's temper will give way; and yet he wasn't no coward, for he went up a ladder to the two-pair back when a naybour's 'ouse ketched fire, and brought down the two children as was sleepin' there, with the tails of their little night-gownds scorched through the flames from the fust-floor winders, as singed 'is 'air and beard, and give 'im that shock, as he give up drinkin', and turned that steady as he've got a shop of 'is own, and doin' well.

But certingly that Alesandrer Pallis is werry lovely, if you don't start from Baker Street station, as is like goin' down to the internal regions, as the sayin' is; for of all the brimstone and smoke as ever were smelt, as I don't believe old Scratch 'isself could stand, for I couldn't draw my breath, and corfed that frightful, as one of my strings give way with sich a bang in settin' down in the carridge, as a party oppersite said she should, 'ave thought as I'd bust a blood-wessel at the werry least, as might 'ave terminated fatal, thro' me bein' that red in the face, as is a sign of the blood a-settin' to the 'ead, as 'ave been knowed to bring on serous consequences.

It certingly is a long journey to Mussle 'Ill, tho' not over six miles off the stones, and there's both busses and trains as goes there, and not near so many stairs as the Cristshul Pallis, and a lovely place, as is a reglar bazaar, and beautiful sights;

and as to sounds, why, they're a-playin' pianners all over the place, and a lovely band, and then a concert, and arter that the orgin to wind up. The grounds is lovely, tho' the walks is pebbly, but a beautiful view, as you can see the smoke of London a-rollin' all over; and there's a swimmin'-bath and swings, with performin' elefants, and a conjuror a-playin' of 'is tricks, and merry nice wittles and drink. So, altogether, we 'ad a 'appy, quiet day, and 'ome at Mrs. Padwick's to supper by a little arter nine, as was crab and cowcumber, with bottled ale and a cold pie.

I were a-sayin' arter supper as it was a pity as there wasn't a skatin' rink at that Pallis, as made Miss Pilkinton take me up that short, a-sayin', "Well, any one to look at you would certingly say as skatin' weren't in your line much."

I says, "Them as is skinnyest often falls the 'eaviest, without no hice to slip on," illudin' to a cropper as she'd come in the Alesandrer Pallis that merry day, thro' a-ketchin' of 'er 'igh 'eel between the boards.

She turned quite shirty over that, a-sayin' as if some on us 'ad fallen, the 'ole place would 'ave come down with a run, as would 'ave been ten times wuss than twenty fires; and then she bust out a-larfin', a-sayin', "When you goes a-skatin', dear Mrs. B., let it be on dry ground."

I says, "That's jest where it is on a rink ; cos," I says, "tho' I might 'ave a broken ead there, as the song says, I never should be drownded ; and," I says, "as to your larfture, it only shows what you are, cos fools always larfs at their own wit, as no one else can't see the pint on."

"Well," she says, "you send word to the Princess of Wales as you wants to come and skate with 'er, and she'll give orders for you to be let in to Prince's."

I says, "I don't want to be let in to no princes."

"Oh!" she says, "they'd be glad to see sich a sight, as Queen Wictorier 'erself would be there to see, and both 'ouses of Parlymint."

I see she were sneerin', and, in my opinion, she didn't never ought to take no sperrit or bottled ale, for 'er nose were quite flamin' at the tip, and she spoke thick ; so as I didn't want no words, I says, "Good-night," and 'ome I goes, and found as Brown were in bed, thro' bein' tired arter comin' up from Shefield, as he'd been down to over four days ; cos it's 'is opinion as forriners is a-gettin' too much of the machcenery into their 'ands, as may cut us out somo day in our cutlery if we don't look sharper than we're a-doin' at present ; for nothink ain't more aggrawatin' than scissors as won't cut, or gets loose at the rivet.

Brown he didn't want to 'ear nothink about the Alesandrer Pallis, cos he's a-goin' 'isself, besides bein' sleepy, as I cannot say as I were myself, so set a-thinkin' over one thing and another afore gettin' into bed, and 'ow things was changed all about 'Ornsey and them parts, even since I got married, as is 'ard on forty year ago, and lived near a year in the Liverpool Road, when all the fields in 'Ornsey Lanes did used to be cattle-layers, as is all 'ouses and streets now ; and there were Mr. Flight, the great cowkeeper, as never could get a thousan' cows together ; and there was Wilson's busses, as always was the Favorites. I shan't never forget the bull a-runnin' at the two Quakers in 'Ighbury Place, as 'ad to cut for their lives, and one on 'em jumped over a 'edge, whilst the other got over into a airey, leastways, would 'ave done so, but for 'angin' by the seat of 'is unmenshinables on the railin's, as the bull stood and kep a-drivin' at, and would 'ave done 'im a injury for life, only but for them iron railins, as checked 'is force, but tore 'is clothes frightful.

Ah ! I well remember 'Ollerway, and that part as Bishop and Williams lived in, as murdered the poor Ightalian boy for 'is teeth, as was Burkers, the wretches, tho' they did used to be carriers as the lady as we lodged with did used often to give 'em a job, little thinkin' as 'er parcel might be in the same cart along with a untimely end ; not but wot

them doctors as bought the bodies was most to blame, partikler in Edinburrer, as were the beginnin' of them murders in the Old Town, as is quite civilized now, as I knows a party as is gone there for to opin a skatin' rink, as will suit the Scotch ; for tho' they do 'ave plenty of ice to skate on, they'd jest as soon do it under cover, without a wind enuf to cut your life out.

I was a-thinkin' about all manner, and felt myself a-slippin' all about the place, as were a-skatin' rink, all werry beautiful with flowers and plants and gravin' imiges, as I knowed were the Alesandrer Pallis. "Ah!" I says, "this is somethink like a skatin' rink."

"I'm glad you like it, dear Mrs. Brown," says a lady, as were a-'avin' of 'er skates fixed on, and I looks agin, and if it wasn't the Princess of Wales.

"Law!" I says, "your Royal 'Ighness, I'm afeard as I've been and come into the wrong room, and may be intrudin' like," as I 'ave 'eard say parties 'ave done in Buckinem Pallis, and been turned out, tho' they was relations by marridge.

She says, "Oh! dear no, as will be always welcome in my pallis."

I says, "Bless your sweet face; and 'ow is the children?"

"Oh!" she says, "well."

I says to 'er, "Wot a muss as Albert Wictor

weren't a-lookin' out of the winder when that owdacious boy took and let fly 'is catterpult slap at the royal train, as might 'ave give 'im a ugly knock, if not the loss of a royal eye. Ah," I says, "I do believe as boys grows wuss every year as they lives, as will insult and assault you both as soon as look at you ; and as to respect for parints, it ain't in the runnin'" I says, "Talkin' of runnin, 'ow did you like Hepsom ? As I'm glad you went, if it were only to give that party a set down as talked about cockney 'ollidays, as tho' cockneys wasn't to 'ave 'ollidays like the rest ;" and I says, "'ow's your Royal ma-in-law, as there's jest five years atween us, as looked wonderful well the last time as I see 'er close agin the Marble Arch, tho' she do dress old for 'er age," as I well remembers 'er royal mother in a front, a-comin' out of the gates of Kensinton Pallis the werry year as she come to the throne, as were the year as I got married, and our Mary Ann is five and thirty thro' me a-losin' my fust, as was twins. "But," I says, "don't you stop 'cre a-talkin' to me, but be off on your skates," and off she went a-glidin' like a swan. So down I set close agin Queen Wictorier, as was a-nussin' one of 'er royal granchildren on 'er knee.

So she says to me, "I don't think as Mr. Disreely looks well on skates."

I says, "He's at 'ome in 'em, any'ow, for he's a

slippery customer ; but," I says, "you must put up with 'im, partikler arter that Gladstin a-ritin' and a-sayin' as you ain't got no power, but only hin-fluence, as is like 'is impidence, and," I says, "I do think as the way they're all a-writin' about your royal family private affairs is downright impidence ; for there ain't a lady not in all the world as they'd make that free with ; and I should like to 'ave seen 'em dare to do it with Queen 'Lizzybeth on the throne, not as I should think of comparin' a lady like you to sich a foul-mouthed old fish-fag as she were. But," I says, "wot will you do now, as these 'eathin blacks 'ave took to droppin' in on you that constant from parts as wasn't never 'card on escept in jografy books, as nobody don't read." I see a black party a-grinnin' close by ; so I says to the Archbishop of Canterbury, as was a-settin' by me a-suckin' of peppermint drops and a-waitin' for 'is good lady as were a-skatin' with Mr. Spurgin, I says, "Whoever is that negrer creetur as is a-squeezin' of 'issclf into the seat, as 'er most grashus ain't 'ardly got room to set on with comfort."

"Oh !" he says, "he's one of our mishunaries, as is a-goin' to convert millions at so much a 'ead."

"Oh !" I says, "indeed ? Ah !" I says, "that's the way the money goes."

"It do, indeed," says Gladstin, as 'ad got 'is lunch in 'is 'at, and were a-peggin' into it. "It's

downright shameful, and 'ere am I a-sellin' my cheyney so as to pay my taxes, as they will 'ave in advance."

"As was your own doin's, old feller," says Dizzy, with a wink, as he 'elped 'issel to a cold potato as Gladstin 'ad got on 'is fork.

"I wish," says the Dook of Cambridge, "as we'd go to war; I've got a lot of young fellers a-dyin' to rush into haction, as we've been and made field-marshals jest to keep 'em quiet."

I says, "Poor dear old souls, as is more like field-mice, I should say, for they'll soon be under the sod, as the sayin' is."

Jest then I 'eard music, and there were Moody and Sankey a-comin' along a-skatin' arm in arm a-singin' lovely, with that there accordion under their arms, as come up to little Prince Albert Wictor a-singin', "Let me kiss 'im for 'is mother." I says, "Drat your impidence, it's jest lucky as 'is royal pa is 'avin' of a soder and brandy, and don't 'ear you thro' the cork a-flyin', or he'd pretty soon kick you for your cheek, and serve you right."

Says Wolly, "I wants to sing, leastways, take a part in a chorus."

"I shan't sing with you," says a party, a-scowlin' at 'im, as I knowed were Newdigate.

"Join me and my son," says Kenealy, "and let's sing, 'Oh ! wot a day we're 'avin'.'"

"I will not 'ave sich a row," says Queen Wictorier, a-'ittin' the ground with 'er umbreller. "If any one don't keep the peace, I'll soon make 'im."

I see old Beastmark, as were 'eatin' of a sossige roll, give a wince at that ; and there was a Irish party standin' close to 'im, as give 'im a dig in the ribs and says, "Put that in your pipe and smoke it, old boy."

It certingly were a grand sight when all that royal family got a-skatin', tho' the Duke of Edinburrer, he give a young gentleman in a 'Ighland Scotch dress, a rough shove out of the way ; as made Queen Wictorier give a short corf, and say "Alfred," under 'er breath ; and that Duchess of Edinburrer, she took and reglar swep Princess Beatrice out of the way, as in course bein' a rushin' Princess, can skate jest like the wind ; so in course would keep the rest at a distance. Not but wot she made way for the Princess of Wales, as come up smilin' that graceful, like a deer, as she is.

So I says to the Prince of Wales, "You'll take one of these ere rinks out to Injier with you, as they ain't got no natural hice over there, I understands, except on tops of mountins, as you can't skate on ?"

He didn't say "Bother Injier," but looked as if he meant it.

I says, "I 'opes as you're partial to 'ot curry, but

don't eat no prawns, as is indigestible, partikler when you don't know where they come from, or wot they feeds on."

He didn't seem not to pay much attention to me, and I 'eard 'im a-snorin'

So I says, "Ah! I dare say he's tired out, poor dear."

"Oh!" says Queen Wictorier, "pray don't go puttin' that into 'is 'ead, for he makes quite fuss enuf about wot he 'as to do; cos I can't stand them levees, and don't feel up to them stuffy old rooms and crowds of parties, as I never see before, and never shan't see agin, I 'opes."

"Yes," I says, "and sich rubbish as comes a-intrudin' theirselves into your werry drorin'-room, as did ought to know better and keep their place; and if you don't put a stop to it, you'll 'ave all the taller chandlers' wives a-comin' next."

"Oh!" she says, "poor things, I don't care as long as they're respectable; but I won't 'ave no 'ussies."

I says, "And right you are, as 'ave always been that respectable yourself, and in course can't countenance wice in nobody, not even if they was crowned 'eads."

"Who are you a-talkin' about?" says a woice, as I turned my 'ead and see were that there Hem-

press, as ain't no more a royal fam'ly than me. I knowed 'er, as I'd see often over in Paris.

I says, "I were not illudin' to yon, mum, as I never did consider you no crowned 'ead myself, so you needn't oller till your corns is trod on ; and you take my adwice : you keep your boy out of France, cos he'll come to a wuss end than wot 'is father did if you goes a-settin' 'im up for a Hemperor ; and you'd better save your money as you've got, cos I knows all about the dimon neckliss a-bein' sold to them Turks," and I give 'er a wink.

Jest then I 'eard a wooice a-singin', "Oh, fie, wot will mamma say ?" and there were a young feller, as were the flyin' Dutchman, a-askin' a young lady for to come and 'ave a turn on the rink. The young lady, she looked at Queen Wictorier, as give 'er a sort of a shake of the 'ead, as much as to say, "Certainly not" ; and away went that young forriner with a flea in 'is ear, as the sayin' is.

I never did see any one a-eatin' more 'umbler pie than Old Beastmark, as 'ad got 'is pocket 'ankercher over 'is 'ead, cos of the flies, as was all a-buzzin' about 'is ears.

"Oh !" he says, "Mrs. Brown, bother the flies, as is all the Jesyists' doin's."

I says, "Wotever made you stir em up, if you thought they was that dangerous ?"

"'Ear, 'ear," says Dizzy. "Take my adwice and let 'em alone till you can prove as they're a-doin' rong and bring it 'ome to 'em, but don't go a-trumpin' up a lot of tales about 'em as you can't prove nothink by."

"Ah!" I says, "that's wot Brown always says, cos in course you can't interfere about religion; and you don't interfere with them peculiar people, as the fools calls theirselves, as let a child die from downright neglect, and yet didn't get no punishment for it, and if they'd been Jesyists there'd 'ave been a pretty 'ow-dye-do. Then," I says, "wot of them Morminutes, as comes over 'ere a-deludin' a set of poor hignorant creetures, and ticein' em over to their parts, for to live in downright willany and wickedness, and call that religion. Why," I says, "even decent Jews 'ave give up 'avin' more than one wife at a time, and in my opinion them Turks didn't ought to be made all that fuss over, with their nasty, beastly, 'eathen ways; and I'm sure I wonders as Queen Wictorier can let 'em come into 'er family, as is a dreadful bad esample for them boys of 'ern, if they 'adn't been that well brought up so as to know as them things was wrong, tho' I've 'eard say as some forriners goes on and neglects their wives disgraceful; but that wouldn't never suit John Bull, thank goodness."

I 'eard some one say "Fudge," close to my ear,

and I turns my 'ead, and if it wern't that young Bonyparty a-grinnin'.

I says, "Wot do you mean, my good lad?"

He says, "All right, old lady; I ain't been edicated in milingtary circles for nothink."

I says, "And thankful you did ought to be as you 'ave been edicated like you 'ave, as might 'ave been throwed among them as don't know wirtue from wice, and don't care for neither, so," I says, "you go and learn 'ow to be a true born Brittin, and forget all that rubbish about bein' a Emperor, as your werry own relations will take and try to upset you out on; and if Gambetter and 'is lot ketches 'old on you, why, they'll take and fry you in your own grease, as is wot Beastmark wished might 'appen to all the French. Leastways that's my 'usban's opinions as 'ave been a-readin' pollytics to me every night this week, till my 'ead's all on the whirl, and everybody seems to me to be a-skatin'."

"And so they are," says Wolly, a-comin' glidin' up to me, and he says, "if I can but ketch one of them Card'nals on the rink, won't I trip up 'is 'eels!"

I says, "Take care as you don't get a bad fall, my dear fellow, yourself."

"Hallo!" says he, "why, you're another Jesyist in disguise, I do believe."

I says, "You call me sich orful names as that,

and see if I don't come down on your corns a-cropper, with my new brass ferril, as'll wake you up."

Says Queen Wictorier, as 'ad got her skates on, and was a-movin' graceful up to me, with the Prince of Wales a-'oldin' of 'er up, she says, "Mrs. Brown, I would say Martha, old friend, don't you mind 'im, it's only 'is fun, as is well beknown to be one 'issel, and as 'armless as a dove."

"Well, but," I says, "wotever does Gladstin mean by sayin' you ain't got no power left? Why," I says, "you're as firm on your throne as you are on your royal legs, as I wouldn't illude to if this wasn't a private rink, as it does my 'art good to see you and all your royal family a-enjoyin' yourselves."

I says, "There goes a plumper!"

"Oh!" says Queen Wictorier, "it's only cousin George, as 'ave come down, as is as good-natured a-creature as ever drored breath, and that kind-earted as he can't a-bear to talk about war, and that's why he's Commander-in-Chief, cos if I'd made one of them reglar firebrands, like John Bright, we should 'ave been at war afore a week were over."

"That's wot I want to be," says Beastmark, "cos if I waits long enuf, them French will get that strong as I shan't be able to crush 'em; and if there

was a row, I'd take and swaller Beljum, like a oyster."

I says, "Are you aware, my fine feller, as he's our fust cousin?"

"Ah!" he says, "so were 'Anover, but a deal you did to save 'im."

"Ah!" I says, "and great shame too, partikler bein' blind, but," I says, "it'll come 'ome to you some day, my fine feller, and when you're a-'owlin', don't espect no 'elp from me."

"Who are you?" he says.

I says, "You thinks I'm nobody, and as I ain't no influence and no power, as I'll show yer, my pippin, if you comes any of your larks with me, and," I says, "you tell your pious William as he'd better give you a month's wages and let you go, cos you'll make it too 'ot for yourself if you stops on, cos," I says, "you're a reglar noosance, not but wot you always was one, as they puts up with jest for a time, but you see if you don't get kicked out when you least expects it, my boy."

It were a beautiful sight to see Card'nal Mannin' come a-skatin' along 'and-in-'and with Dr. Cummin', as he were a-'oldin' up jest the same as the Archbishop 'ad got Moody and Sankey by each 'and, and they all three come bump up agin a party in westments, as were a-sprawlin' about all over the place, not knowin' which way to go, as tried to 'ook

on to the Card'nal and the Bishop of London too, as shook 'is fist at 'im, a-sayin', "Mr. Myconikee, if you dares to go so near 'im I'll be down upon you," as reglar upset that Myconikee, as 'eld out 'is 'and to a perliceman for to perfect 'im agin the Bishop, as made the Bishop skate off on the quiet.

Then Moody and Sankey begun a-preachin', as made me say, "Do 'old your row, as is enuf to drive any one mad, the same as you 'ave done more than onc a'ready, as turned one poor man's brain, as 'ave been and took 'is own life, the same as that poor servint gal as 'ad got into 'er'ead as she were lost for ever and ever, as ain't true religion, in my opinion, as I don't 'old with, nor yet with them as says it is."

Says Beastmark, "Martha, old gal, I wish you'd give me a idea wotever to do with the Pope, for I'm in a reglar mess thro' bein' afeard to go on, and dursn't go back, and nobody won't believe as he's give orders for me to be killed, tho' I've 'ad lots of letters rote to them Jesyists, as is that deep as they wasn't to be caught."

"No," I says, "old boy; we all knows as old birds isn't caught with chaff, and they would 'ave been bigger fools than you to be took in so easy, as any one could see was all your own doin'."

Says Card'nal Mannin', a-comin' slidin' up that

quiet, "Pray, don't make sich a noise, my good Mrs. Brown, or we shall attract notice and get turned out."

Says the Archbishop of Canterbury, "And so you ought to be; you ain't no right 'ere."

I says, "Let's all go to the City Temple, as is open to all, as can be used for a-skatin' or any games week-days, as is all for free-love and Beecher, thro' only bein' wanted a Sundays."

"Yes," says a parson, "with pleasure, only the perlice won't let me."

Says Beastmark, "You only wait a bit, and I'll wipe you all out, priests and parsons too, for I won't have no religions at all, as don't want none myself, and nobody else shan't 'ave none, cos I'm as good as everybody, and a deal better."

"Look 'ere, Beastmark," says Hemp'rор of Roosher, "I see your little game, but it won't wash. Do you think as we don't all know as it's you as rites them letters about killin' you, or gets 'em rote? But if you wants to be killed, you'd better go and 'ang yourself on the quiet, cos nobody 'll care, and you'll be a good riddance of bad rubbish, as the sayin' is."

Says Dizzy, a-whisperin' in his ear, "Give it 'im 'ot, but don't say as I set you on."

Says the Hempror, "He's a reglar cuss, and will bring on war afore I'm ready for it, and I don't

want 'im a-takin' work out of my 'ands, as means to bully everybody some day myself."

I says, "Excuse me, Hempror, but, pray, don't 'ave no words with us, cos them family rows is so low, and if Beetrice do want to walk upstairs afore Alfred's wife, why, it ain't worth while to 'ave no words over it."

"Oh," he says, "we've squared that, cos they goes up different stairs, so don't never meet. And a nice patchwork mess you've been and made of that house for my dorter, as ain't no better than stables."

"Well," I says, "then whyever didn't you buy 'er another, as might 'ave 'ad Buckinem Pallis cheap, or 'ave bought up Her Majesty's Theayter, and then it wouldn't never 'ave been turned into that low-life 'ole as they've made it with their preachin'."

I 'eard a flop jest then, and lookin' round see that Zanlizar Sultin a-settin' in the middle of the floor a-lookin' werry foolish, with 'is skates in the hair, as I could see 'ad 'urt 'isself, leastways 'ad fell 'eavy; and then I 'eard Queen Wictorier say, "Oh, pick 'im up, some on you; but whyever didn't you get rid on 'im afore I come from Scotland, as I can't abear them niggers."

Jest then that Sultin come up close agin me, and a-raisin' of 'is 'ands, says, "This is a blessid woman

as I'd tie up in a sack in a jiffey, for she's no better than a pig."

I says, " You may be a Sultin as much as you please, but you ain't no gentleman."

" Never mind, Martha," says the Prince of Wales, as come rollin' up that smilin'; " he don't mean no 'arm, and he's all right at bottom, for he's a-goin' to adopt all my children."

I says, " Wot, and are you a-goin' to let 'im 'ave 'em?"

" Yes," he says. " The country grumbles so about the money as they costs, so I won't stoop to ask for no more, but I'll take the kids over to 'is place and leave 'em on my way to Injer."

I says, " Never!"

He says, " Oh, I can't 'elp it, tho' it'll break my 'art to part with them. I shall miss their dear little faces at breakfast, but if the country can't keep 'em, they must go to them as can."

I see a tear a-strugglin' in 'is royal eye as he were a-takin' a soder and brandy. So I says, " It shan't never be allowed. Wot!" I says, " part them dear children from their dear ma! Never!" I says. " I'd pawn my boots fust, or I'd go to Parlymint myself and ask for the money fust."

Says Kenealy, " All right, old gal, I'll back you up."

I says, "Don't you interfere, cos they'll all clear out the moment you begins to talk."

Says Wolly, "Come away from 'er, she's a Jesyist in disguise."

"Well," I says, "some thinks as the Pope allows you thousans for bringin' the Protestant religion into reddiecle."

Jest then, up comes Queen Wictorier 'erself in a reglar flurry, and says, "I never was so insulted in all my life."

I says, "Who 'ave dared to ?"

"Oh!" she says, "fancy bein' called names by a cabman, as I give eighteenpence to Kensinton Pallas, a-goin' to see my own dorter, and then to be called Mrs. Jackymetty Prodgers."

I says, "You give 'im 'is full fare, but I certingly would summons 'im for 'is insultin' lang-widge, not as I 'olds with impudence, even in a cabby, if underpaid, as a many will give 'em a tight shillin', partikler of a wet night, as is 'ard lines for cabby, partikler when parties as been a-enjoyin' of theirselves, or pre'aps a-goin' out to a good dinner, and then begrudge a cabman sixpence, as is a-goin' to set on a damp box all the night with not the price of a pint over 'is money, nor yet 'ardly a screw of tobacco, as is enuf to try the temper."

Says Card'nal Mannin' a-turnin' werry sharp on

me, "It's all thro' you as that there Permissive Bill didn't pass."

I says, "I don't want to 'ave no words on them pints, Card'nal. I likes my tea quite as much as ever your hemynence does, or even the Pope 'issel'; as I'm sure wouldn't allow no cuttin' off nobody their beer in modyration, not if he knewed it."

"Hear! hear!" says Queen Wictorier, with a smile, "but," she says, "you must all clear out of 'ere, cos," she says, "'ere's Alfred and 'is wife a-comin' as'll be a-complainin' to 'er pa, if any one stands up afore 'er."

"Law," I says, "she's a good-natured lookin' creetur, but," I says, "don't let's stop and cause no words; come along, your hemynence," and I ketches 'old of the Card'nal and he gave me a push, and away I went, a-slippin' on my skates, and come sich a cropper, with a crash enuf to make you think as it were the end of the world.

"Wot the devil are you up to now?" says a woice.

I says, "That ain't langwidge for a Card'nal."

Then I 'eard Brown say, "Let me get a light," and then a fusee were struck, and I was a-layin' slap over the towel 'orse, as was upset under me, and the chair as I'd been a-settin' on, a top on me.

So Brown, he says, "This comes of you a-fallin' asleep in that chair, instead of gettin' into bed."

"Well, but," I says, "some one give me a violent push, as I thought were Card'nal Mannin' in the skatin' rink."

Says Brown, "Card'nal Mannin', indeed, you've been a-dreamin' agin, and jest now you ketched 'old of my ear that sharp, as I shook you off, and the push took and rolled you over."

"Ah!" I says, "this chair do run on castors, as it's well it's no wuss. But," I says, "I can't make out my dreams, and feels sure as somethink is a-goin' to 'appen."

"Well," says Brown, "the best thing as can 'appen to you, is to get a good night's rest, and not go a-dreamin' about no cardinals, nor yet skatin' rinks."

So I gets into bed, and don't think I turned till jest on seven, and can't think why I should dream about skatin' any more than 'untin', as is both fine hexercise for them as is inclined to corpulence, as worry often ends in fat about the 'art, as is 'ow the Rev. Mr. Piggins come to 'is end, as 'eld with the Weslyans, and a worthy man, but couldn't fight agin four meat meals a day, and a snack with 'is tea; and 'is good lady took afore 'im, as fretted thro' a-takin' of it that deep to 'art, as he couldn't 'ave Reverend put on 'is toomstone, as isn't a thing as ever I should fret over myself, tho' I do like to know the spot where any one lays; not as I should

shed tears about it at seventy-nine, like Mrs. Biles, as 'ad 'er parints berried in St. Pancris churchyard, as 'ave all been dug up and rolled away to make room for the railway. No doubt my dream was all thro' Brown, for he'd been a-talkin' a deal about them rinks over supper, as filled my 'ead with skatin' as is openin' all over the place, as is all merry fine, no doubt, but wot I says, is this ; in course, when a-skatin' on hice, if it breaks thro' with you, why, there you are in the water, and you knows the end on it, as is sure to come up in a fortnight, but if in skatin' on dry ground, it were to give way with you, and the hearth were to swaller you up, as the sayin' is, you wouldn't never turn up till the end of time, for to be berried decent, as in course they wouldn't allow a stone to be put up where you went thro' in the middle of a rink, as would be terribly in the way. I don't 'old with skatin' on hice, leastways, not at night, with a thick fog and torches, the same as there was one winter on the Serpentine, as were 'ow poor Kate Lewson come to lose 'erself, poor thing ; as I can't blame myself about, for if ever I did talk to a gal like a mother, it was to 'er, as did use to work at a fust rate 'ouse, but wasn't never satisfied, as I do not consider from eight till eight 'ard 'ours myself, with a 'our and a 'arf out of it for meals ; but, poor Kate, she weren't never satisfied, and always dressed above 'er station, as

in my opinion, silk mantles is all werry well for them as can afford them, but ain't becomin' them as 'ave to work 'ard for their money, and better bestowed on their parints, for tho' I'm one to stick up agin 'ard work and poor pay, yet won't never incourage them as give theirselves them hairs, and wants you to rite to 'em "Miss" when in service, as I told Matildar Tusin, as lived parlour-maid to a judge, as I never would, nor yet Brown neither, tho' she is 'is werry own niece.

Well, it were that tremenjous 'ard winter as we 'ad jest when I lived agin the Edgware Road, close agin where the Cater Street conspiracy broke loose, as shot the perliceman off the ladder; as I were a-sayin', Kate Lewson come to me, and asked me for to take 'er in, thro' a-goin' to be married to a gentleman as 'ad took 'is lodgins in Praed Street for a fortnight, as was the parish church as they was asked in. So knownin' as she'd a werry good place at a manty-makers, I says, "'Ow comes it, Kate, as you've left your place?'"

"Oh!" she says, "I didn't wish to be married straight from a sitiuation; besides, I wants to get all my things ready."

I says, "Wot is he?"

"Oh!" she says, "he'll have a lot of property some day."

"Oh, indeed!" I says; "whose property?"

She says, "It's a uncle, I believe, as is in the 'olesale timber line."

I says, "Wot's 'is name?"

She says, "I don't know the uncle's name, but my James's name is to be kep dark till we're married."

"Oh!" I says; "and no doubt all right, tho' I don't like keepin' names dark, and no employment, as in gen'ral mean's idleness."

I knowed as Brown would like me to be friend to that gal, so I told 'er I'd take 'er in; and she come accordin', tho' I must say as she 'ad too many boxes for me, partikler as she said as one or two on 'em belonged to 'er James, as 'ad made 'er lovely presents, as she showed me, as I didn't think much on.

That werry same evenin' that young man came to supper, a-sayin' as he couldn't get away afore eight o'clock; so I says, jest in fun, "Ah! I suppose early closin'."

He turned reglar scarlet, and then pale, as I didn't pertend to notice, so didn't say no more; but the next day Kate says to me, "Oh, Mrs. Brown, you did 'urt James' feelins so, illudin' to early closin', jest as if you thought as he were a shopman."

"Well," I says, "and I shouldn't think the wuss on 'im if he was."

He come every evenin' as Kate were with me, but always late, and that ropped up all over the face,

and once he brought me a werry nice shawl for a present, as he said was for my kindness ; but I said, "No, I thank you ; I'd rather not 'ave it, tho' much obliged all the same."

"Oh!" he says, "do keep it ; I can get plenty more, and it's so nice and warm, partikler as we're a-goin' on the ice one evenin', if the frost lasts."

I says, "Oh, are we?"

"Well," says Kate, "if you wouldn't mind it, Mrs. Brown, I should so like to see skatin' by torch-light, as James 'ave give way, and agreed to take me."

Well, I didn't like to say no, cos I must say as I were pleased with that gal, as 'adn't been not forard in 'er ways, nor yet never gone out one evenin' along with that young man alone, tho' he'd asked her over and over agin. So as it were the last night as he come in all muffled up, I said as I'd go, but 'ad made 'im take away 'is shawl the night afore, for I felt as he couldn't afford to be a-makin' of presents, partikler as might 'ave a family on 'is shoulders afore he could turn 'issel round, like poor Mrs. Portlap, as I took tea with on the Friday evenin', and twins before eleven o'clock.

So arter eight that young man he come for us, and of all the cold, foggy nights, it were tremenjus, but bein' well ropped up, I didn't feel it, and on we walked, till we got in the park ; and as soon as we

got arf acros, there was sich a crowd, as give me quite a turn, so I says, "I ain't a-goin' on the Serpentine with sich a many, as no hice in this world couldn't bear."

Says that young man, "All right." And on we walks; and 'avin' 'old of 'is arm, I didn't feel nothink slippy under my feet, till all of a sudden he says, "Oh!" and slips my arm away from 'is, and cut off like a lamplighter. He give me sich a spin round, as made my 'ead reglar swim agin.

I 'eard a woice shout, "Stop thief!" and down I went that flop, as if I 'adn't been well ropped up, might 'ave broke my bones. A reglar crowd were round me. I couldn't see nothink of Kate, nor yet 'er young man, and was collared by a party as says, "This is one of the gang," and gives me to a perliceman, as took me over to the station as there were in the park.

He says, "Your pals 'ave left you in a 'ole."

I says, "You don't mean to say as you picked me out of a 'ole on the hice where it's dangerous."

He says, "You were in a part as can bear well, tho' for all that it's the middle of the Serpentine."

I says, "Were I? Then that's the reason as you collared me to save my life, as, no dout, with my weight I should 'ave been thro' in another minnit."

"No," says he, "that party 'ave give you in a charge for felony, and they be gone after the others."

"Wot," I says, "a-goin' on the Serpentine, is that felerny?" I says. "I don't believe as Queen Wictorier will allow it. Wot 'arm 'ave I done? as ain't a Ome Ruler, and don't believe in Ortin."

Jest then in come that party as 'ad give me in charge, as says, "You're a receiver of stolin goods."

I says, "Take care wot you're a-sayin', my good man, as am a respectable married woman, tho' I 'ave been on the hice without my 'usban', jest to take care of a young gal, and if you doubts my words, come to my 'ome and see."

"Oh," he says, "all right; I'm a-comin' there along with the perlice."

And away we come, and as soon as he got into my place he pulls out a search-warrant, and pounces on them boxes of Kate's, and sure enuf, when opened, they was full of dress-lengths in silk and stuffs, and gloves and lace and stockin's, and three parrysoles, and all manner, as that party as 'ad give me in charge claimed for 'is property, as 'ad been robbed away from that young man's employers.

So I sent round for Mrs. Padwick, and then for the baker, and Mr. Cliff, as is a corn-chandler, to bail me out, as give their word for me to appear; and as to the boxes, they was all took away.

I never was more put out, set a-waitin' and a-waitin' for that poor gal to come in till jest on one,

as never turned up ; and the next day I went afore the magistrat, and there I were charged with receivin' of them stolen goods, tho' let out on bail ; but not afore the detective said as he'd been a-trackin' that young man, as never 'ad showed his face by daylight for months, and knowed as he were wanted, so kep out of sight ; so consequentially lewanted when a-ketchin' sight of his employers on the hice.

Afore I left that perlice-office, that young man were in custody. So I says, "Let me speak to 'im."

They says, "No, it can't be allowed."

I says, "Ask 'im wotever 'ave become of that young woman."

He sent me back word as he'd married 'er, but 'adn't set eyes on 'er since I saw 'im last.

That young man he'd done all he could for to repair his fault by givin' up everythink, and got two years over it ; and I see 'im once in prison, and he told me as Kate were 'is lorful wife, as they was a-goin' to hemigrate the werry next day after goin' on the hice, and 'ad brought me that shawl as a partin' gift, as 'ad been married from my place on the quiet one Wensday mornin', when the church-in's and christenin's was a-goin' on in Paddington church.

I was dreadful put out a-thinkin' over that poor gal and wotever had become on her, but never 'card

nothink about her, tho' I asked at the place where she did used to work, and got a werry short anser at fust from the party as she worked for, but thro' knowin' one as were a good customer got to be more civil, and told me as them gals was the werry torment of 'er life, as 'ad robbed 'er over and over agin, and dursn't 'ave 'em up, cos then all the rest would leave, and she'd be left without a single pair of 'ands with work as must be sent 'ome to the minnit, thro' bein' a weddin' order, or preaps fam'ly mournin'.

So I says, "Things is a-comin' to a pretty pass, as soon we shall be like a lot of naked savidges agin, a-robbin' and a-plunderin' one another all round." Cos it's all werry fine talkin', but as I says to my gal, if you wastes my time, and go a-idlin' and a-talkin' when sent on a errand, you're a-robbin' me, as your time is mine. But law! that ain't nothink to cuttin' off four yards of silk off a dress as was a short length; and so me and that party agreed over morals bein' dead and gone, cos we both knowed as there was many a gal as would make a good servint as 'ave been ruined by this day-work, as gives 'em all the hevenin's to their-selves, as goes a-filanderin' about to music-'alls and places, so in course won't go into a fam'ly as lives quiet and can't be out in the street constant.

I couldn't rest for thinkin' of that young

woman, as 'ad lost 'er character, tho' she 'adn't been took up. But it wasn't no use me a-botherin', tho' I went more than once to that prisin to see that young man, and found out when 'is time would be up, as they took off a part of it for good be-aviour. I got Brown to inquire for me the werry day he'd be free, as were a Wednesday.

So I says, "I'll try and see 'im, poor feller, as were but a lad arter all, under twenty, and more fool than knave, as the sayin' is."

It were a nasty drizzly mornin' as I made my way up to Coldbath Fields jest afore twelve o'clock, and as I come along the street from the Under-ground as I'd come by, I see a poor woman with a child in 'er arms a-walkin' up and down in front of that prisin gate, as I seemed to know was that poor Kate. I was a-goin' to cross and speak to 'er, but I didn't like, so I dodged about a bit, and waited till the clock struck twelve and the prisin gate opened, and out came that poor feller, as made my 'art bleed to see 'im, as poor Kate made a rush up to and ketched 'is arm, and when I see 'im give 'er a 'asty kiss and take the child out of 'er arms, I thought as I must 'ave bust out a-cryin' myself. They walked on that quick as I never shouldn't 'ave ketched 'em up, and there wasn't no boy or gal about as I could offer a 'apenny to for to stop 'em. But afore that poor Kate 'ad gone far, I see as she

were obligated to set down on a door-step, and when I got up to 'em 'ad turned dead faint. He was a-tryin' to lift 'er up when I touched 'im on the shoulder, and says, "Give 'er a drop of this, as is a mixture as I always carries a wiol on in my redicule, as 'ave saved more lives than thousans of doctors."

One or two parties stopped to see wot were the matter, as I said as the young woman were faint.

I says to 'im, "Poor feller, where are you a-goin' to?" He didn't make no answer, and I see as he couldn't speak for tears. So I says to a boy as were standin' with 'is mouth open, "Get a cab," and as luck would 'ave it, one come by, as we got 'er into, cos parties would keep a-stoppin', and when she were in, the cabby says, "Where to?" That poor fellow, he says, "I don't know," as made some boys larf; I says, "Nonsense, don't know." I says, "To the Hedgeware Road;" and into the cab I gets, and off we drove, and it wasn't till we got that poor thing up into my room as she give reglar signs of life.

The gal as lived with me when they was there before 'ad left, and the gal as I 'ad were goin' out for 'er olliday that arternoon, so I started 'er off, and then 'ad the place to ourselves, but not afore she'd fetched some mutton chops, and ordered the

beer. Poor feller, 'ow he did relish it to be sure. As to Kate, she was dreadful low; and couldn't eat nothink but a cup of tea. I never see any one enjoy a chop like him, as looked all right, thro' 'is clothes bein' genteel, and nothink singler about 'im but 'is 'air. If ever parties had learnt their lesson, it was them two, poor creeturs; and as to 'er, she'd been wuss off of the two, as 'ad supported 'erself at slopwork, with a penny for settin' of a shirt for the machine, so I give her all the 'elp as I could, for she 'ired a room to take 'im too, close agin the Middlesex 'Ospital, as they lived in for about a month, and then went out to Canader, thro' 'is friends a-comin' forard, as was respectable, and I 'ope he'll do well, if 'er 'ealth do but 'old out, as is a cold climit. So whenever I 'ears about skatin' I thinks of them two, as I've 'eard from twice, and a doin' well, with two more children, as the fust was as fine a boy as you'd see in a day's walk, tho' I'm sure she must 'ave pinched 'erself for to keep 'im, as was as fat as butter when I first see 'im; but in course I ain't mentioned names, and it's singler 'ow he come to be cort like that on the hice, as was all thro' 'avin' of 'is skates ground the evenin' afore, as the perlice was on 'is track, and foller'd 'im up to my place, and never left 'im all the way to the Serpentine, and I'm sure the blow as I got a fallin' on that hice reglar shook me, for I felt giddy in my 'ead for

many a day, and smashed my little glass bottle to shivers, as 'ave led to me a-buyin' one of them as is in wooden cases, as if broke under you, don't lead to no 'arm from broken glass.

But, in my opinion, there's a deal too much pleasurin' goin' on now-a-days, as makes young people think of nothing but dress and diversions ; and as to parties a-tellin' me as I'm old-fashioned, I don't care if I am, for I can remember when parties in trade lived over their shops, without bein' above their busyness, and now must 'ave their willers out of town, and drive their pheatons, as makes all them young people in the shop think as they're a-goin' to do the same, as is all my eye, cos we can't all be top-sawyers ; not but wot every one did ought to try and do their merry best to get on in the world, so long as they does it 'onest, and not go a-overreachin' their neybours, nor yet cheatin' and robbin', as is wot we're all a-comin' to, like poor Mrs. Malden, as lived 'ousekeeper to one of them merchant princes, as they call theirselves, as is only tradespeople arter all, 'cwever they may come the bounce with their country seats and town 'ouses, and sons and darters a-goin' to the drorin'-room, and a-cuttin' of it that fat ; not but, as old Mrs. McFlinty did used to say, as most of them as is called nobility ain't sprung from nothink but the shop-board, as is to their credit if done 'onest, but

yet too many hairs they puts on, and more than one wants remindin' as their grandfathers was rag-pickers, and some of their fathers born in the workus, as nobody wouldn't illude to if they didn't be that upstart, over bein' made titles, as shows they ain't the true-bred nobility. But as I were a-sayin', poor Mrs. Malden, as 'ad only one room, and 'arf a crown a week from the parish, and goodness know 'ow she lived, and 'er place as neat as print, and a reglar picter for cleanness 'erself, as certingly 'ad a good stock of clothes and tidy furniture, as was why they refused 'er out door relief at fust. Well, poor thing, she'd saved enuf in service to bring 'er in about forty pound a year, when livin' with one of these great money-makers, as was Quakers at fust, but 'ad give up the garb, as they calls it, and turned reglar swells, and took all 'er bit of money into the busyness, and then took and smashed for millions, and never did nothink for 'er, tho' they 'ad all took care of theirselves with money settled on their wives, as I don't consider 'onerable ways myself, and I do believe as Mrs. Malden would 'ave died of want, if it 'adn't been thro' Brown, as I told all about it, as set down and rote them parties sich a letter, as brought ten shillin's a week in no time, so then, in course, she give up the parish money, and wasn't no burdin on 'er friends, as was poor people; but turned out

better for 'em than were espected, all thro' a-findin' of somethink in a old box as she'd got by 'er, as were a paper she showed me one evenin', as I was a-settin' with 'er. The moment I see it I says, "That's money, mum."

"Law," she says, "I don't think so, but," she says, "it were give me by a old Portygee gentleman, as I lived with and nussed to the last, jest afore I took that place, as were over thirty-five years in, and then to fail and lose every farthin' of 'ard savin's, as I give master with my own 'ands one evenin' arter family prayers, as he always read, tho' sometimes a little sleepy over 'em, a-speakin' thick, and 'esitatin' at the long words; and it so 'appened as I never give 'im this 'ere paper, not a-thinkin' it worth anythink, thro' bein' rote in that forrin way, and I'd put it away and never givin' of it a thought, for that old Portygee, he spoke werry little Inglish, and I thought give it me for fun."

"Well," I says, "in my opinion it's money, and if you'll let me take it and show it to Brown, I'll let you know as soon as he can find out for you."

So she says, "Take it, and welcome," and right my words proved, for if that dirty bit of paper weren't worth over two 'undred poun's, thro' bein' a receipt like for money as parties 'ad lent to them Brazeels, as is more 'onest than their naybours, and pays what they owes; and no doubt that old Por-

tygee party meant to give it to Mrs. Malden for 'avin' nussed 'im as she did. So, poor soul, she've got enuf now to make 'er easy in 'er mind to the end of 'er days, as there ain't nothink like bein' easy in your circumstances for to do. But, law bless my 'art, I do think as all the world ain't nothink but sham now-a-days, tho' in course sham hice and sham skatin' is all werry well, jest like false teeth, as is better than none when natur gives way with you; and I'm sure there ain't been no hice to speak on about London, for I've seen them costers a-passin' Mrs. Padwicks with their donkeys a-drorin' a load as wouldn't 'ardly go for nothink in a hice-well, as plenty comes from abroad a'ready; and when we've found out the North Pole, no doubt they'll take and tow a reglar hicebug down to us, only I 'ope not too near, as might run us down, and would be sure to give us a nasty chill to the air if it were a-ridin' at anchor off Margate, as is in general cool, cos in course hice must be kep in a cool place, or would soon get melted near the Isle of Wight, or down by Torkee, as is always mild. I'm sure ever since that Arctic Expedition went off, I ain't never 'ardly ad 'em out of my 'ead night nor day, and 'ave waked Brown up two or three times, a-shoutin' in 'is ear, "Ice a'ead!" jest as I 'eard 'em do aboard of the steamer a-comin' 'ome from Merryker, as passed thro' seventeen of them

hicebugs in one night, as is nasty things to be troubled with in the night, as the officer told me as counted 'em it were all thro' the moon a-risin' not in wain, tho' it was nearly on the wain, as is 'ow they come to see 'em, as I do 'ope this 'ere Espedition a-goin' up to them frozin parts won't set all the hice a-floatin' as might come down 'ere and block up the channel, and we should be in a nice fix, as the sayin' is. But, law bless me, it's no use a-thinkin' about dangers, cos look at wot might 'appen if Beastmark were to 'ave 'is way. Why, he'd take and seize Beljum, and pretty soon drop down on France, and then pot us, and make us all into Prooshins, only I think he'd 'ave 'is work cut out; leastways that's wot I said to Brown, as were a-readin' to me them pollytics the other night after supper, as went to bed with my 'ead full on 'em, and see Beastmark, like a Polish bear, come with 'is arm opin to 'ug me, so I give 'im sich a stinger over 'is nose with my umbreiller, as made 'im dance agin and roar out, and if I 'adn't been and give Brown sich a clout of the 'ead as woke 'im up, and he says, "I tell you what it is, old gal, if you're a-goin' on like this, I shall take to a spare bed or you must, for my life's in danger, as shall be found black in the face, or my 'ead off thro'your violence."

"Well, then," I says, "Brown, you did not ought to read me them pollytics arter supper, as

loves my country and 'oners my Queen, and am that sorry as there's that feelin' between that there Beetrice and 'er brother's wife as she should bounce up to town for to get 'er lunch at Kensington Pallis, when the Dook and Duchies were a-takin' the babby down to see its royal grandma at Winsor, as must 'ave been werry 'igh words, tho' she did come 'ome to dinner; but in course them Rooshins is a 'orty lot, and looks down on us, as certingly well they may, cos Brown 'ave been in Roosher, and always says as our pallisses and places is like pigsties in the eyes of them Rooshins, and in course the Sar, as they calls 'im, 'ave got millions upon millions to spend, and ain't got to go to Parlymint for a few pouns when he's a-goin' to start 'is family in life, and promise as they shan't 'ave nothink more than bare necessaries; and nicely they must 'ave turned up their noses when they 'eard that the Dook of Edinburrer 'ad Buckinem Pallis lent 'im, but that there wasn't no servints to wait on 'em, so pre'aps the Duchies 'erself might 'ave 'ad to anser the door with the babby in 'er arms, and only a charewoman come in for arf a day jest to do the bedroom and wash up, as ain't royal family ways I should say.

But I suppose it don't much matter what 'appens, as I were a-sayin' to Mrs. Malins, as drops into tea frequent, cos, tho' we have not been them friends

as we did used to was, yet, 'avin' made it up, why keep up coolness? So I says to 'er, "It ain't no use; heverythink is a-comin' to a end, together with the 'Stablished Church, and 'igh time too, when them as is ministers cries stinkin' fish;" as I considers it when the Archbishop says as Moody and Sankey is right; and that there Gladstin, as is that 'Igh Church, as parties thinks is a reglar Papist in disguise, he sends Moody and Sankey down to Eton, under Queen Wictorier's werry nose, as is the 'Ead of the Church, as them rantin' preachers all sets at defiance, and them parsons lets them low-life discenders preach to them boys, as all belongs to the 'Stablished Church by law. I never 'eard of sich a thing, never; cos, in course, if the Pope was to send a lot of Jesyists over 'ere, to preach all about the place, they did ought to be let in everywheres, jest like Moody and Sankey, cos fair play's a jewel, as the sayin' is; and why ever ain't one as likely to be right as the other? Cos in course the Archbishop, and all them others as 'olds with Moody and Sankey, says, "Go on, old fellers, we're all in the same boat, as is only all a-keepin' guessin'-shops arter all." Leastways, that's what Brown says, as, tho' not one to 'old with no 'umbug, likes to 'ear what all has got to say, and it's 'is opinion as it's better to 'ave one Pope than a 'undred thousan', as is common sent, as the sayin' is.

But, law bless my 'art, it's werry orful to be a for-riner, as I were a-thinkin', and never be able to make yourself understood, except in that gibberish, like that poor old duffer of a Sultan of Sandybar, as that party as 'ave come with 'im can take and stuff 'im up with any lies, and make out as he've said things as he wouldn't never dream of sayin' ; as it ain't in reason as a 'eathen Turk should go about blessin' everybody and everythink, unless he's a-comin' of the old sojer over us, and a-tryin' to creep up old Dizzy's sleeve ; not as he'll get much there. Why, as Brown were a-sayin', if he's a true Turk, he considers all of us a cussed lot of Christshun dogs, as he did ought to spit upon ; and as to Queen Wictorier, he'd 'ave 'er drownded in a sack for a-darin' to show 'er face, if he's a true Turk ; and if he ain't, let 'im chuck it up, and say wot he is, and not be a 'umbug, jest like a Jew as eats pork, and keep his shop open of a Satterday ; cos, as Brown were a-sayin', a true Turk would make us all into Mommytans, or else 'ave us all massacred ; and as to sayin' as he's friends to us in Injier, why, he ought to be doin' his werry best to drive us out ; so it's all sham 'im a-talkin' about bein' so pleased with us ; if so, let 'im take and turn Christshun, cos I'm sure he's got plenty of choice in believin', as must be puzzlin' to any 'eathen to make out which is the real Christshuns. But, any'ow, he must think

as it's all rubbish a-talkin' about religion, and all that, cos there ain't no religion in it ; cos wot people wants is to do as they like, and be let alone, and go to a place of wussip of a Sunday, as is respectable for them as lives in good 'ouses, and 'as nice families as they can afford to dress well ; and werry nice it do look to see father and mother, and all the young folks, a-turnin' out to church, tho' there's many a father and mother as sends the children, and don't feel well of a Sunday mornin', and obligated to take a dose ; and it's wonderful 'ow they picks up in the arternoon, and is as jolly as sandboys by dinner-time.

Brown, he's orful down on what he calls the look of the thing, as is wot in gen'ral parties thinks about ; but, as I always says, nobody can't know that, so we didn't ought to be too 'ard on nobody, tho' I must say as I've been kep from church myself, like a many more, with a showery mornin', and a new bonnet ribbon, but that were when I were a young woman, and didn't give a thought of 'ow time were a passin', as is werry different to when you come to that time of life, as you knows for cer-tin as you're best part thro' your time, and 'ave see them as is your junierers go afore you. Ah ! that makes you think, if you've got any sense in your 'ead, without no Moody-Sankey parties a-comin' to convvert you ; cos as to goin' to chapel or church

either, and a-singin' of salms, and feelin' quite good, why, parties will do that of a Sunday evenin', and be that pious, as is leadin' of the wust of lives all the week, as I knowed a party myself as would leave 'is wife and family for weeks without 'ardly bread, and 'im a-spendin' the money in wickedness and wice, as would come to 'is mother-in-law's of a Sunday, and say as he felt renewed, and conduct family worship, and three times chapel into the bargin, and be off agin Monday to 'is old games, till he done it once too often, and broke 'is neck out of the two-pair back ; leastways, were found breathin' on the water-but^t, as stood close agin the back door, but never spoke, so they never could tell 'ow he come to be out at that winder in his night shirt, thro' 'im a-sleepin' in that garret, when 'is seventh child were born, as were a little gal, and subject to fits, and lived till seven; but certingly his widder did fret for 'im, but as I said, " Pray don't try to talk to me about 'im bein' that religious man, cos I don't want to speak agin the dead ; but if he were religious, then give me them as ain't, tho' as I've said before, he'd talk good by the ole evenin', and pertend to esplain many texts, but to no use; for when he tried it ou with me, I told 'im jest to dry up. Not as ever I would allow Charley Lampiter, as were a bookbinder, to talk 'is rubbish afore me, as 'ad got a lot of them infidel ways, and took and scoffed

downright at everythink, and made fun of his sister's prayers, and rediculed the Bible.

So I says to 'im one night, when he were a-talkin' about bein' enlightened, not 'avin' no religion, I says, "Charley, you're werry clever and werry learned, no doubt ; where did you get it from ? "

"Oh," he says, "I reads."

"Yes," I says, "no doubt ; but how do you know as them books as you're readin' is true ? "

"Oh," he says, "there's sich argyments in 'em."

"Yes," I says, "but 'ow about the argyments the other side ; do you read them ? "

He busts out a-larfin', and says as it would take a lifetime to do it.

"Then," I says, "'ow can you know as you're right if you've only eard one side of the story ? "

Cos that's like Mrs. Belpoe, as lived next door to me, and said as I were a-tellin' lies, in sayin' as I never throwed scalden water over 'er cat.

I says to 'er, "Prove as I did it."

"Why," she says, "I can't prove it."

"Then," I says, "don't call me a liar," I says. "Cos you're sayin' as I'm one don't prove as I am." And as to 'urtin' a dumb animal, it's wot my bitterest enemy never couldnt say of me, not over all the back walls as was ever inwented, and all as

I did was to shake the noosepaper at the cat, as were a-settin' on the winder-sell, a-starin' at my canary, as were a-flutterin' of 'issel to death thro' fright, and knows me as well the moment I goes near 'is cage, for to give 'im a bit of grunsel.

As to quarrelin' with naybours, I 'ates it, and that's why Brown doesn't never want to know none, and I'm sure I 'adn't never exchanged a word in all my life with the parties as lived next door the other side, in the name of Cobbleduck, afore that old beast, Old Sinful, come there with 'is clump foot. I think them parties 'ad lived there over six months, as was three children and the mother, a merry saller look, and always a-blown' up somebody, from the baker's boy to the milkman, and no wonder 'er 'usban' was a commershul, as wasn't at 'ome once in three months, and then got it 'ot of a Sunday mornin', as I could 'ear 'er a-goin' on, with the doors all open, and bein' that quiet, as you could 'ear the singin' at the Methodist Chapel at the back.

I remembers well fust a-noticin' as the 'ouse were shet up, thro' a-fancyin' as I smelt a chimblly a-fire, and went out in our back gardin to see which 'ouse it come from.

I says to the gal, "They are shet up tight next door."

She says, "I 'card the baby a-cryin' a good

deal this mornin' and they've took in the milk thro'
a lettin' down the airey with a string, and I ain't
seen no one about."

I says, "I'm sure there must be somethink agoin' wrong, so you watch, and tell me if you notices anythink particular;" but law ! she's like all the gals as ever was born, with no more 'eads than pins on their shoulders, and never thought no more about it I dare say. But I kep' my weather eye up, as the sayin' is, in passin' of the door, and see a little gal a-takin' in a loaf, as looked arf starved, with 'ardly a rag to 'er back.

So I says, "My dear, you've got sickness in the 'ouse, ain't you?"

She only gave a nod.

I says, "'Ow's your mother?"

She says, "Dreadful bad, and don't know me."

I says, "'Ave the doctor see 'er?"

She says, "No, not since baby was fust took ill."

I says, "'Ow long ago?"

She says, "Over three days."

I says, "Let me speak to mother."

She says, "She can't speak."

So in I goes, and never did see sich a sight as that bedroom, as were the first floor front, for on the bed there were the poor mother a-layin' out of 'er senses, and the baby by 'er side, and two

children in the next room in bed, and two on the floor a-playin' ; and that poor child as were a-takin' in the bread, as might be twelve at the outside, she'd been a-doin' for 'em all, cos the two next to 'er was down with the fever.

I 'ollered over the wall to our gal for to go and fetch Mr. Bluebox, as is our doctor, and to tell Mrs. Challin as I wanted 'er.

They was soon with me, and Mr. Bluebox said at fust as their lives wasn't worth a straw ; but as I says to 'im, tho' in a stuper like, she ain't so much wasted, as 'ad only gone unsensible that werry mornin' a-tryin' to wash the child with sich a violent pain in 'er 'ead, as took 'er senses away.

I soon got 'em all made sweet and clean in their beds ; and a party at the wash-tub, as throwed all the suds on to the gardin, and not down no drains, as only sends disease a-floatin' all thro' the naybour'ood. She made a good fight for it with beef-tea and brandy, that poor ooman, as I didn't take my clothes off for two nights with 'em, and brought 'em all thro' it down to the babby, as 'ad convulsions thro' its teeth, as it was a-cuttin' cross ; not as I 'olds much with that. The last as was took bad was the eldest gal, as 'ad a precious narrer squeak for it, and 'pon my word wot the world's a-comin' to I can't think ; for if that man, as calls 'issel a man, and is a 'usban' and a father, 'adn't walked out of

the 'ouse, leavin' two of 'is children ill with the fever, and never rote nor took no notice, except a line to say let me know by the doctor when the danger of infection's over, as 'ad better 'ave the 'ouse fumigated and whitewashed, with new paper in the bedrooms, as the landlord will do, if not, inform the parish. "Well," I says, "my beauty, you're a nice spcciment;" but, law, it come 'ome to 'im beautiful, for thro' 'im a-writin' that un-feelin', it put 'is wife's back up, as the sayin' is, as took and found out as he'd got another 'ome the werry week as 'er grandfather died, a-leavin' of 'er a pretty fortun, as I considers pretty nigh three 'underd a-year, all tied up for 'er and 'er children, as the trustees on took and got a diworce for 'er, so he were reglar cut adrift, and served 'im right, as might 'ave been 'ad up for biggimy, thro' deceivin' of a party as to 'im bein' a married man, as 'ad went to the register office, as parties don't consider no sin. "But," as I was a-sayin', "I don't 'old with no diworces," not as she were one to think of marryin' agin, if anyone would 'ave 'ad 'er, with that fever a-settin' in 'er limbs, and all the money tied down to the children, as two of them never throve arter, tho' the babby got thro' it. I must say as that Mrs. Cobbleduck she were grateful to me, and is so to this day, as come to 'elp 'er in that trouble when 'er own sisters wouldn't come near, as was

that wild at 'er a-gettin' all the grandfather's money, and then come the carney when they found as they couldn't go to law over it, cos the old man were right enuf in 'is nut, and as to 'avin' forgot 'em, that couldn't be, for he'd left 'em twenty poun's a piece for mournin'; and as to Mrs. Cobbleduck, she went at fust to live quite genteel, tho' a cripple, close agin the Cristshul Pallis, as she were often took into in a wheel-chair, as is where I met 'er the last time as I ever was there, with both 'er gals, that growed into young ladies at boardin'-school, and good figgers, tho' plain, as don't suit fancy 'ats, but will get 'usbands, no doubt, thro' the money. As to their ma, she's growed to be the mildest creetur, jest all the world like milk, and give over all 'er scoldin' ways, as you could 'ear three doors off, as was all temper, thro' bein' that soured and bad off, for there ain't nothink to sour your temper like not 'avin' of a shillin' in your pocket and your last three'apence gone for the manglin', and nothink by you as you could raise the price of a cup of tea on, with everythink put away down to your boots, as they'd only lend eighteen pence on, with sickness in the 'ouse. Ah! it's all worry fine to talk about poverty, but there ain't nothink so bad for the temper as when you're a-tryin' to keep up a decent appearance, and not a copper 'ardly in your pocket, and yet you struggles on, well knowin' as you must make the

best on it; for we all knows to be poor, and to seem poor, is the old gentleman all over, as the sayin' is; and that's 'ow that poor Mrs. Cobble-duck were sitiuated, well a-knownin' as that feller were a-spendin' of 'is money away from them as 'ad a lorful right to it. Oh! he come the artful dodge more than once, ritin' letters, a-sayin' as he were a-dyin', and a-goin' to prisin and all like that, so them trustees took and sent 'em all away over to France, or somewheres, so as he couldn't worret 'em, and the last time as one of 'em rote she told me as 'er ma could walk without a stick all thro' 'er a-settin' up to 'er neck in warm water, as come out of the ground, jest like Clifton 'ot wells, as was all the fashion once, but 'ave gone out now-a-days, jest the same as Bath, as I've 'eard say as old Queen Charlotte were sent to worry often when 'er temper got that bad as there wasn't no bearin' of 'er, poor soul, as is the way with a-many when they gets on in years, as is better than endin' of your days foolish in your 'ead and bedridden.

But talkin' of 'ot water reminds me of skatin' rinks, as I never shan't forget the one as I went to see along with Mrs. Padwick, all thro'a-droppin' in on 'er one arternoon, as is my 'abits frequent, and found a party a-settin' there a-waitin' for'er, as we gotta-talkin' that friendly, tho' she were dressed shabby genteel,

and dirty finery, and said as she were aunt to 'Melia Motcum, as Mrs. Padwick were werry kind to, and'ad give 'er a bed in 'er servants' room, to oblige the party where the gal worked. So I natrally thought as Mrs. Padwick knowed all about 'er, partikler when Mrs. Padwick come in, and pressed 'er to stop tea, as she did, arter sayin' as she couldn't on no account, as 'er brother as she kep 'ouse for would be waitin' for 'er; and when we 'ad a friendly glass arter tea, she wouldn't touch it at fust, and then only a teaspoon in a tumbler of water, but got 'old of the bottle with our backs turned, and slopped it in pretty free when she'd took a gulp at the water, as she spit out in the coal-skuttle, a-pretendin' as it 'ad went the wrong way. She were gone afore 'er niece come in; and when the gal 'eard she'd been there, she didn't say nothink, but didn't seem sorry as she'd missed 'er, as made me think there were a screw loose somewheres, as there often is with young people, but didn't think no more on it; so that when Mrs. Motcum said to me, as lives out Brixton way, "Oh! do come, Mrs. Brown, and see me, as we got my two boys 'ome, and am a-goin' to make a party for to wisit our new skatin' rink," in course I were all on, as she said Mrs. Padwick were a-goin', and so were Miss Pilkinton, as 'ad come in. Mrs. Padwick she give me the straight tip on the quiet, as she'd 'eard say as Mrs. Motcum 'ad knowed better

days, and lived with 'er brother, Mr. Grumley, as were werry close-fisted.

So I says, "Suppose we was to make a day in the country on it, as we've been a-talkin' about, and 'ave our picnic in Mrs. Motcum's gardin," as she'd been a-blowin' about all that evenin', a-sayin' as she couldn't abear to live in town, as couldn't draw a breath of fresh air, and all like that.

So in course Mrs. Padwick were agreeable, and rote to Mrs. Motcum, a-fixin' the day; but as to Miss Pilkinton, all as she were ever knowed to bring to a picnic were a corkscrew and some salt, as she set on in the train, as got locse in 'er pocket, so wasn't no use, and would 'ave been werry painful if the corkscrew 'ad give 'er a wound, as only worked thro' 'er dress, and run into a little boy's lcg as set next 'er, as got well shook for fidgettin', poor child, with 'is poor little thigh werry nigh bleedin'

Mrs. Padwick and me managed the eatables, and tho' I says it as did not ought to, I never see a finer pigein pie, with six pigeins in it, and two pounds of steak, and not a bit of fat nor gristle, with 'ard eggs and seasonin', as I jest raised the crust on with a knife when it come from the baker's, for to let the steam out, so as it shouldn't turn sour. I 'ad a bit of 'am uncooked, as weighed near six pounds, for cuttin' in rashers, and a cold fore-quarter of lamb, with lovely lettices, with all their outside

leaves and roots cut off, for salid, with two cow-cumbers, and two quarts of ready-shelled peas, two pounds of butter, and three pounds ten ounces of cheese, and a dozen 'ard-boiled eggs; cos there would be sixteen in all, and we took tea and sugar, and no sparin' with crusty cottages and a cake for tea.

I'm sure I reglar stared at gettin' them things ready, with two bottles of sperrits, and didn't take no beer, as ways 'eavy, and can be got anywhere, partikler bottled stout, as is wot I always takes with cold wittles.

Them things cost me and Mrs. Padwick 'ard on three pounds from fust to last, cos Mrs. Motcum 'ad rote and said, "With pleasure," as she wanted to give them two boys of 'ern a treat, as 'ad jest come 'ome from their fust voyage, as one 'ad been in Injier, and the other to Chinee and Japan, and 'ad brought 'ome all their savin's to Mrs. Motcum, as 'ad been a mother to them, as was twins, tho' born on different days, as is singler, tho' true.

It were a 'ot, thundery day as we started for Brixton, so, not to 'ave no confusion, me and Mrs. Padwick said we'd 'ave a cab, for to go and take the things with us, as made Miss Pilkinton worry unpleasant, cos she wanted to come too, but said as she couldn't set with 'er back to the 'osses; and as to me or Mrs. Padwick a-settin' on that front seat,

why, it couldn't be done. So I told Miss Pilkinton as she might set on the box, as would see the country better.

She was a-goin' to flounce out of the room, a-sayin' it were insults, and as 'er Edwin wouldn't never see 'er let 'erself down in stoopin' for to set next a cabby ; so I says, " You needn't stoop, nor let yourself down neither, as can get up easy by the wheel, and the gal can 'old your things down tight round your ankles," as I knowed were her weak pint, thro' bein' give to swellin' .

She says, " Thankee, I'd rather not go," but at last agreed as she'd go by train with Mrs. Motcum's niece, as we'd persuaded to go, thro' a-wantin' a olliday, and in busyness close agin the Euston Road, and as 'ad a bed at Mrs. Padwick's, thro' bein' a decent gal, tho' a 'air lip, and don't care about lodgin' with a lot of gals as is out every night of their lives, a-goin' about a-takin' of their pleasure, as ends in gen'ral bad, and would be far better if them gals was in service, and not so much liberty, as they calls it.

Well, this ere young woman were of the steady sort, so 'avin' of a 'olliday, said she'd go to 'er aunt to please us, tho' she didn't care about it, so it were agreed as 'er and Miss Pilkinton should go by the train accordin' as turned out werry unfortunate in the end, for this ere Melia Motcum, she

said as a friend would meet 'er at the station, and give a smirk, so I thinks to myself, why, surely you ain't been and cort no flat for a sweet'art; but she 'ad, and who should he be but Miss Pilkinton's Edwin, as were serous, with a clump foot, and 'ad met both Melia and Miss Pilkinton two different times at meetin's as was 'eld in different places, as they called bein' in connection with Moody and Sankey.

There wasn't no words at fust when they met, cos he'd told Miss Pilkinton on the quiet as he considered Melia a chit of a gal, and then called Miss Pilkinton a old thing behind 'er back to Melia. He was a reglar salm-singin' cadger, he was, and I'm pretty sure as he boned one of the bottles of sperrits, with 'is 'andy ways, a-elpin' to unpack.

Never in my days did I 'ave sich a ride as that cabman give us, as were 'ard of 'earin', and 'ad been a-drinkin'; and as to the'orse, why, the only place for 'im, poor feller, were the nacker's yard, as were too old to eat, 'ad lost a eye, couldn't move out of a crawl, and was werry nigh fallin' every step, and that old brute a-wippin' 'im I wouldn't stand, so took and snatched it out of 'is 'and thro' the front winder of the cab, as snapped the 'andle in arf, and I throwed the lash away, as made 'im frightful abusive in gettin' out, and wanted five shillin's for it, as I squared it for a shillin'; but

never was more shook and jolted, and over a 'our in goin' the distance, as ain't four mile and a arf, all told.

But in course, tho' you don't never like to make no remarks about anybody's 'ouse, yet my thoughts was deep over that place of Mrs. Motcum's, as stands in a row, as one end ain't never been finished, and of all the bits of front gardin I never did, and the 'ouse a-lookin' like Dirty Dick's, as I well remembers in the City, close agin where the Injy 'ouse did use to stand, as 'adn't 'ad a brush laid on it for over fifty years, thro' bein' a reglar miser. Not as Mrs. Motcum were a miser, but quite t'other, I should say, as 'er next move would be the workus, as is a reglar shabby-genteel, in a old black alpaca a-droppin' off 'er, as a needle and thread would 'ave made tidy, and wore a fancy old thing on 'er 'ead, and a dirty woollen fisher, full of 'oles, across 'er shoulders, a pair of siled yaller gloves on, a-lookin' the decayed lady all over, as is wot she takes a pride in, cos 'er grandfather were coachman to one of the princesses as died crazy, out Blackheath way.

I'm sure you'd 'ave thought as Mrs. Motcum were a decayed royal family all over by the airs as she put on, tho' she did smell of onions enuf to 'ave knocked a 'ole royal family back'ards, as were tripe she let out as they'd 'ad for supper over night, as she said

'er darlin's doated on, as were a change no doubt,
arter so much salt wittles at sea.

I've see many a pigsty in my time, but nothink
to Mrs. Motcum's back gardin, as you smelt the
dust'ole from the front, as was all trod down flat,
and only a bit of box, nearly dead, and some weeds
a-growin' at one end, and a old Winsor chair, as 'ad
been left out for months, I should say, and a clothes
line, with some rags and a pair of stockins, full of
'oles, 'angin' out; and there was some fowls, poor
things, as looked as tho' they roosted in the chimblly,
and a poor old rabbit in a old tea-chest, with wires
across, as Mrs. Motcum said was one of 'er brother's
pets; and then she begun a-blowin' about 'ow lovely
'er gardin 'ad been till 'er brother took to keepin'
fowls, as she said she 'adn't never took no pride in
it since, as must 'ave been twenty year ago, I should
say, when the 'ouse was fust built.

There was sich a orful smell of drains and pigs
in that gardin, as she said was the naybours, that
I were glad to get back in the 'ouse, tho' the
parlour was stify and that small, so as I couldn't
set with comfort nowheres.

It were jest on five when we got there, and
found as Miss Pilkinton, and Edwin, and Melia
Motcum there afore us, as 'ad pretty nigh filled up
the parlour. Mrs. Motcum said as she meant to 'ave
'ad the drorin'-room, only as 'er brother 'ad been

and filled it up with 'is experiments, as made Melia larf and toss 'er 'ead on the sly.

I was reglar droppin' for my tea, so when they talked of goin' to the skatin' rink fust, and comin' in to a 'eavy tea arter,

I says, "Oh! lets 'ave a cup fust, as I'll go and make it myself," so 'urries into the back kitchen, as tho' I were a-doin' of it for fun, and found sich a filthy old bundle of rags of a charwoman, in a bonnet, a-unpackin' my basket.

I says, "My good soul, do leave them things alone."

She says, "I'm the party as comes in and does for Mrs. Motcum every day, as would trust me with untold gold."

I thought to myself that's about all as I'd trust you with. But I made myself werry pleasant with that old party, as was my only chance of gettin' a cup of tea, as the kettle wasn't even filled; and if it 'adn't been as I found the top of a old tea chest to put under it, wouldn't never 'ave biled in this world. Talk of dirt and filth, I never see it till then, and 'ad to wash up three cups and saucers to scnd Mrs. Padwick in a cup of tea, as poor Melia come out to 'elp me, a-sayin' she couldn't stop in there, so took my own along with 'er out of a basin, but 'ad to send for the milk, as that old beast of a woman wouldn't 'ave gone for only I promised 'er

a glass of somethink if she'd look sharp over fetchin' it.

I 'ad my tea in that kitchin, and so 'ad Melia, as told me a deal about 'er aunt. I sent 'er in with more tea into the parlour, and found in follerin' 'er, as they were all sixes and sevens there, as the sayin' is, for Miss Pilkinton 'ad 'ad a reglar row with 'er Edwin, as she see 'put 'is clump foot down gently on Melia's, as she were 'andin' of 'im 'is tea. Miss Pilkinton she took and flew up, and poor Melia that frightened as she dropped the cup of tea, as were red 'ot bilin' and a large breakfast cup, slap between Miss Pilkinton and Edwin, as was a-settin' that close together as it scalded 'em both, and made a splotch on 'er apricot musling as large as a pancake, and up jumped Edwin, and down he put 'is iron clump on Mrs. Motcum's instep, as yelled in agony, and down came 'er brother with nothink but a dressin'-gown and smokin'-cap on, as looked a mask of grease, and used sich langwidge, as made me and Mrs. Padwick walk out of the room, thro' not likin' to be called sows to our faces.

Poor Melia came arter us, and said as we'd better go to the rink, where we should meet the boys. So we three walked on slow, and Melia said as she were sure Mrs. Motcum didn't mean to come, cos, she says, she ain't by no means sober now, as 'ave put away all 'er things for drink,

and ain't got a rag to 'er back but wot she stands up in.

"Well," I says, "goodness knows, she's got plenty of them. But," I says, "wotever becomes of them boys?"

"Oh!" she says, "they don't lodge there now."

I says, "Wot, no 'ome for 'er sons, arter all as she said about 'avin' of a 'ome for 'er dear boys?"

Says Melia, "They ain't no sons of 'ern, but two boys as their mother died when they was born, as my uncle, Mr. Motcum, 'ad to take care on, and tho' their father took 'em away when he died, as was then eleven, as is jest seven years ago, arter she fust took to the bottle, as broke my poor uncle's 'art; but them young fellers always comes to see 'er, and will give 'er a suvrin, as she's never sober while it lasts, nor 'er brother neither."

Well, by this time we'd got to the skatin' rink, as will no doubt be merry nice when all finished, and I was thankful to get a seat, as rested me, tho' 'ard. I set there, and took a little on the quiet out of my own flask, as Mrs. Padwick 'ad took and filled with the merry best afore leavin' 'ome.

It was nearly a 'our before parties begun a-comin' in to skate, as some on 'em did beautiful,

and young ladies as shot about like blackbirds a-flyin' in werry scanty clothes, and there was some little boys and gals as done it beautiful. Arter a bit Miss Pilkinton and Edwin come in as 'ad made it up, as made Melia turn sulky, and then them two young sailors come along with a pal, as were that stout as he couldn't keep 'is balance on them skates, as runs on wheels, as 'is feet kep a-runnin' forward, and wouldn't never 'ave kep 'is legs if them two young sailors 'adn't ketched 'im under 'is arms and reglar pulled 'im all over the place.

I wasn't a-goin' to try no skates, cos I'd 'ad a buster of that at Brighton ; but me and Mrs. Padwick set a-lookin' on and a-listenin' to the music, as were a milingtary band as played beautiful in uniform, and lots of people come in as kep a-skatin' to the music, as looked like dancin'. In course, Miss Pilkinton she must put on them skates, and 'er Edwin as couldn't wear 'em with 'is clump foot, he kep a-oldin' on 'er up and a-oppin' all about.

Well, presently, one of them sailors he got Melia Motcum by the 'and, and she really did skate beautiful. As they was goin' round, and I could see Miss Pilkinton were reglar wild with rage at Melia doin' of it so well, as were as awkward as a cow 'erself, and kep a-comin' down reglar floppers, and 'ad Edwin down twice a-stumblin' over my feet.

Arter a bit that other sailor boy come and asked Miss Pilkinton if she'd take 'is 'and, as she jumped at, tho' she didn't get on no better with 'im.

Well, that fat party he were a-settin' down by me, and arter a bit he says, "If I could only get a good start I should do."

I says, "Oh! for that matter I could start you."

He says, "Jest let me 'old your 'and, to get steady on my legs."

I says, "By all means."

"Oh!" says that Edwin, a-comin' up with a grin, "I'll lend you a 'and."

So up we all three stood, and each on us 'ad 'old of the fat party's 'and, when all of a suddin down he set, with 'is legs a-flyin' up, and pulled me down, and sent Edwin a-flyin' forard. Jest then Miss Pilkinton and 'er young sailor come up behind us, and went a cropper over us jest as Melia and her young friend come up in front, a-meetin' 'em, as sent 'em flyin' backard, and two or three come croppers behind us. We was all a-layin' a mask of ruins in a'eap, and when we was 'elped up, the stout party were that tore as it's a muss as I 'ad a needle and thread 'andy, as Melia could take 'im to a quiet corner and patch 'im up; but as to Edwin, he'd been and barked 'is shins, and was that split up at the back as he 'ad to go 'ome at once with a shawl tied round 'im and a umbreller up.

I was frightful shook myself, not to say knocked about. Miss Pilkinton were all out at the gathers, and in that rage cos Melia she'd been and gone off with Edwin ; and I was a-thinkin' as we'd better go back to Mrs. Motcum's, when a party come up and says to me that the place were not for larks, and as he see I were full of my fun, I'd better go elsewhere ; "for," he says, "I've seen you a-settin' a-tryin' to trip parties up by a-puttin' out your foot and your umbreller as they was a-passin', as may be sport to you, but is death to them."

I says, "I ain't a party as would be the death of no one, not even in sport, as is why I don't 'old with football, and 'as my fears over cricket, thro' 'avin' of all my front teeth knocked out once, and a bruise in the small of my back as big as the round of a cheese-plate, thro' a-lookin' on at the Oval, as were the one-legged match agin the one-armed, as is a wonderful sight to see 'ow active parties can be, tho' mutilated."

"Well," says the party, "some one will be injured if you sets 'ere a-cockin' out your legs, so you'd better take a back seat."

I says, "In course I will," and up I gets, and as it were a-gettin' dusk me and Mrs. Padwick 'ad a glass of ale and went off together, them young sailors a-sayin' as they'd foller with that fat friend and Miss Pilkinton.

Well, we walked back, me and Mrs. Padwick, and come to the 'ouse, as I knowed agin, tho' it wasn't the right number, and Mrs. Padwick were doubtful. It were all shet up and dark.

So I says, "I think as your friends is all gone to bed," for we'd knocked and knocked agin.

She says, "My friends ! she ain't no friend of mine, as never set eyes on 'er till that arternoon, as I come in and found 'er a-chattin' with you that friendly in my front basement, and thought as she were a friend of yourn."

"Law !" I says, "I found her a-settin' in your room a-waitin' to see you, as told me 'er name were Motcum, and she'd come to ask about 'er niece, as she was doatin' fond on."

"Gammon," says she, "the girl can't abide 'er, and I wouldn't 'ave asked 'er to stop to tea only thinkin' she were a friend of yourn."

"Well," I says, "don't let's 'ave no argyments, but, friend or no friend, I do 'ope she'll let us in with all that basket of prowisions, as I'm nearly starved."

Says Mrs. Padwick, "I'm ready to drop."

I says "Let's 'ammer at the door 'ard, as can't 'urt the panel," and so I did with my umbreller 'andle.

Arter a bit, I 'eard a winder open, and a woice says, "Who's there?"

I says, "Me, Mrs. Brown, as am come to supper, and the rest's a-follerin' from the skatin' rink."

The party at the winder says, "If you don't go away this hinstant, I'll throw some water over you, as there's sickness in the 'ouse."

I says, "What a bang," and I says to Mrs. Padwick, "it's that beast of a brother, as is tellin' them lies in licker."

Jest then there come sich a duckin' from the winder, as must 'ave been a pailful at the least, as jest missed Mrs. Padwick all but 'er bonnet, and reglar drenched me.

Says Mrs. Padwick, "It's the rong 'ouse as we've come to, Martha," and ketches old of my umbreller, for I was in that rage, as I were a-goin' to break that parlor winder; and so it were, for jest then them sailors, and the rest come by, and says, "Wot are you a-doin' there? Why it's number seventeen as we're goin' to, and this is number seven."

I was reglar upset, and could 'ave took and 'ad a good cry over it, wet thro' as I was already, and all my things spilte; but I wouldn't give way, and on we went to Mrs. Motcum's, as the gas were all a-flarin', and the street door opin, and in we walked, and of all the sights as ever I see, nothing never come near it; there was Mrs. Motcum dead drunk

a-layin' slap across the parlor table' and 'er brother in a 'eap in the corner.

I says, "Let's try and collar the wittles, and go to a respectable place and eat it."

So I goes into the kitchen as was empty, leastways, the old woman wasn't there, no more was my basket, not a westment on it, nor anythink, only the two bottles of sperrits as was empty on the parlor floor, as them two beasts 'ad been and drained without even a glass, as them two young sailors said was their 'abits, and as they was surprised at 'earin' we was a-comin' to see 'em.

I says, "Wherever can the basket be, they can't 'ave swallered that?"

Says Mrs. Padwick, "That old woman's took it."

"Yes," I says, "and my shawl too."

Says that fat party, as were the jolly sort, and did nothink but larf, "You come to my place, and I'll find you somethink to eat."

So we agreed, all but Miss Pilkinton, as said as she couldn't think of goin' to a single man's 'ome. So got on the tram in a 'uff and went off.

I never did enjoy a bit of cold 'am, and bread and butter, with a glass of stout, more in my life, than that fat party's, as was the jolly sort, and made me 'ave somethink 'ot for fear I should take cold thro' the duckin', and then arter that would see us to the train, a-gettin' our tickets, tho' not allowed

on the platform, so wished us good night at the bottom of the stairs.

We'd got nearly ten minnits to wait, so down I set, a-feelin' dosey, and all of suddin, in come the train, as shot ever so far past.

I says, "They'll bring it back agin."

"That they won't," said Mrs. Padwick, and on she run with me a-follerin' 'er. I jest see the tail of 'er gownd a-gettin' into the train, when on it went. I 'adn't 'urried, thro' a-thinkin' there'd be plenty more, but it were the last. There was one as the porter told me would go to London Bridge the oppersite side.

So I says, "That's better than 'ere, as can get a bus to the Edgeware Road." I 'ad to go upstairs and downstairs ever so far to get to that other platform, and it were jest on twelve o'clock when I got into that train. Whether I fell asleep, or wot I did, I never can't tell, but all of a suddin I woke up by a party a-sayin', "All change 'ere," and if I wasn't at Bermunsey, and not a cab nor a bus nor nothink. Well, I set off to walk to London Bridge, as they said was under a mile, but I was over a 'our a-doin' of it, and every time as I took and stopped for rest agin a post or a shelter, a perlice a-sayin', "Move on, now, none of your games 'ere;" not as I were a stranger in them parts when a gal, for my own father's uncle did used

to live close agin Cherry Gardiu stairs, as 'is grandfather remembered it all corn fields, and the young Pertender a-landin' quite well, and 'ad see in the river the vessel as King George the Second 'ad sent all the crown jewels aboard for to send 'em all over to Germany, as he fully espected to be obligated to go back to with 'is wife and family. All the boys in the river was for Prince Charlie and the white cockades ; but, law, that's all over now, and I do think as I should 'ave died but for a cup of 'ot coffee as I got at one of them stalls, as was werry refreshin', and a great blessin' to a many poor souls as is out all night a-scrapin' of the roads, as is orful cruel work to set poor old men to, as isn't preaps more than fifty, but broke down with poverty, and their own faults, as in gen'ral gets bad coughs and is great sufferers.

I don't think as ever I were more pleased than when I 'ailed a cab in Tooley Street, as were a-goin' to put up close agin Paddin'ton Green, and so we all got 'ome together, and I give 'im a glass of somethink at my own door, and couldn't 'ardly undress for bein' that tired, with the clock on the stroke of two, as never disturbed Brown, as I do believe could sleep thro' a field of battle with cannons a-firin' all round 'is 'ead.

When I told Brown about that Mrs. Motcum, he bust out a-larfin like a 'orse marine, as the

sayin' is, and says, "Well, I'm blest if you didn't ought to be called Mrs. Green, for to be took in like that; and as to Mrs. Padwick, next day, she rayther turned on 'er 'eel agin me, a-sayin' as there 'adn't been no occashun for to take and wittle a town; and as to Mrs. Motcum especitin' of sixteen to supper, it were a reglar plant. 'Owever was I to know that she were a drunken swindler; but never no more you don't ketch me a-goin' out on the spree to no skatin' rinks, tho' I'm glad as I did go, cos now, thro' a-knowin' so much about them rinks, I can shet up any one as tries to come over me on the subjic; and if Queen Wictorier on 'er throne was to say to me, "Martha, wot's your opinion on 'em?" I should anser, "Please your Grashus, they ain't intended for them as is grandmas in the course of natur, but for any one as can throw out the chest, and keep their right side uppermost." Why, it's equal to any hice as ever was froze in this world, and no drags nor yet 'Umane Society required; and in course might roast a ox on it, if asphalte; tho' some-on 'em is wood, as wouldn't stand fire, we all knows. I'm sure as them skatin' rinks will turn out fine things for the limbs, not as ever I should let a child go on 'em too soon, as would be as bad as puttin' on 'im on 'is legs too hearly, as 'ave caused many a one to go bandy to 'is grave, not but wot it matters

with a strong child ; and we all knows as bay-salt and water will often strengthen a weakly one. For boys and gals both I believes as skatin' is fine hexercise, and in course with these ere rinks it won't be the same disappointment as it often is jest when you've 'ad your father's skates give you, or preaps a new pair, away goes the frost like a wishun, and there you are next mornin' with a warm rain set in, as is enuf to prowoke a saint as 'ad 'is skates ground ; and really we did ought to be purwided with artifishul everythink in the way of weather, for there ain't no trusting to nature, as 'll throw you over in a hinstant ; and if you 'as 'othouses for to grow fruit and wegetables, why not artifishul frost for to check things when a-gettin' too for'ard ; for as to the seasons there ain't no trustin' to 'em, for I'm sure I ain't knowed 'ow to dress all this summer, but 'ave been a'-overin' between my welwet pollynaire and a warm shawl all the time ; and as to underclothin', why, it's as much as your life's worth to throw off a slip, as preaps it's 'avin' so many of them skatin' rinks 'ave throwed a chill in the hair, but I'm one for hexercise, and likes a lark in moderashun ; but you won't ketch me agin a-mixin' with no parties as is unbeknown, as may play you a slippery trick, skatin' rink or no skatin' rink, all the same.

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